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The "Teaching of English" Series

General Editor—SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

CHAUCER AND SPENSER

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Date of First Issue 18/11/43

No. 79

Geoffrey Chaucer

From a pen-drawing by E. Heber Thompson, after the portrait in the MS. of Thomas Hoccleve's poem "De Regimine Principum."

CHAUCER AND SPENSER

Contrasted as Narrative Poets by

GUY BOAS

THOMAS NELSON & SONS, LTD.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

First published September 1926

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS

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GEOFFREY CHAUCER

English Literature before Chaucer

Anglo-Saxon

GEOFFREY CHAUCER is commonly called "The Father of English Poetry." Whether this name is satisfactory depends on the view taken of the effect of the Norman Conquest.

Before the Conquest, English literature was composed in the language of the Anglo-Saxons, and not only differed in vocabulary from modern English nearly as much as from modern German, but in subject-matter and atmosphere was totally unlike that which was written after William the Conqueror had made himself at home.

The long epic, *Beowulf*, is typically Anglo-Saxon work in style and subject: it is virile, but crude, with both the merits and defects of primitive art. It smacks healthily of the elemental life of the earth, in which courage and strength are prime virtues, and weakness the prime misfortune: it is real. But it lacks the civilized virtues. There is no grace either of style or characterization. Though several curious references are made to Christianity, the Christian qualities of mercy and loving-kindness do not assert themselves. In fact, *Beowulf* is a pagan poem of fighting and feasting and faring the sea, and its style is appropriately wild. It was probably composed before the invasion by the Angles.

Between then and the Conquest comes the religious poetry of Cædmon and Cynewulf, which shows an advance in thought and expression on *Beowulf*: but still there are few signs of literary grace.

Middle English

After the Conquest a complete change came over the national life, and this is reflected vividly in the literature. The sturdy, uncomfortable Saxons, who had not even been able to build a road for themselves, were now instructed by the Normans in the gentle art of living. They were taught to build and to cook, and to organize their Church, their army and navy and law. Sir Walter Scott points out that in the English language food before it is cooked is described in words of Saxon origin, such as ox and sheep, while it comes to the table in French, as beef and mutton. The influence exerted by the Normans upon Church and State is evident in the number of pertinent words which are of French origin: religion, army, soldier, general, judge. The literature which is called Middle English, linking the Conquest with Chaucer, reflects this change. The poetry of Robert of Gloucester, Robert Manning, Laurence Minot, Nicolas of Guildford, and of the Metrical Romances, all shows a new sense of refinement, of pathos, and of elegance, which was unknown to the Angles and Saxons. In place of the old English alliterative measures, the modern system of rhyming develops, and stanzas in imitation of the French are attempted. But the respect in which Middle English literature is chiefly sundered from that of modern England is the multiplicity of dialects in which it is written. Before the Conquest the West Saxon dialect predominated, and the student who has mastered it has the key to the greater and best part of Anglo-Saxon literature. But owing to

the disturbance caused by the Normans, Englishmen in various parts of the country became more than ever cut off from one another, and fell to talking, and so to writing, numerous dialects. Moreover, from 1066 until about 1258, when Henry III. issued his famous Charter in English, the country was bilingual and the official language of the upper classes was French; hence the French influence on the vocabulary of Chaucer. It is unfortunate that the London dialect did not emerge and predominate in time to make Chaucer easier for modern readers.

The England of Chaucer and his Literary Debts

Critics and historians of literature who are interested in every aspect of a poet except his genius have written at length on the significance of Chaucer's work as social and political history. They have also expended so much skill in trisecting his work into periods—French, Italian, and English, as one might tabulate the precise development in a student by the number of terms which he has sat at his desk—that the reader turns with relief from the books written about Chaucer to the book written by him.

The modern temper of Chaucer's work is almost startling. His humour is far more akin to that of the author of the *Bab Ballads* than to any Elizabethan. The age in which Chaucer wrote was that of the weary war with France, the Black Death, the Peasants' Revolt; and he saw the growth among the people of a critical spirit fostered by these stern events. Led by Wyclif and the Lollards, Englishmen became critical of their Church. Led by Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball, they looked askance at the aristocracy and monarchy. They grew weary

of that " romance " in literature which they did not find reflected in life, and the " gestes " of the Middle Ages are ridiculed in Chaucer.

In many respects the fourteenth century resembles the twentieth. The present century is also a period of criticism, and, having suffered the acid test of war, has also grown impatient of artificial romance. The reign of Queen Victoria has bequeathed to it the three Reform Bills, which correspond to the revolt of Richard's peasants. Wat Tyler and Jack Straw reappear as trade union leaders, and the work of Wyclif is carried on in the Life and Liberty movement.

The spirit of neither century is to be regretted. The deadliest disease of a people is that stagnation which killed the Roman Empire. The vital discontent of Chaucer's time is preferable to the dreary vacuity of the century that followed, and it is better that contemporary England should also be moved by the discontent sometimes labelled " divine," provided the pot does not boil over, than that it should be listless and apathetic.

Chaucer as a young man saw military service in France, and later went on diplomatic missions to Italy, where he may have met Petrarch. The French poets to whom he is clearly indebted are Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meung, and Guillaume de Machault. From Italy he was influenced by Boccaccio and Petarch, and slightly by Dante.

As Chaucer worked on, his genius expanded and his literary debts diminished. He reached his highest in *Troilus and Criseyde*, the poem adapted from Boccaccio, which was written about the middle of his life ; and in the incomparable *Canterbury Tales*, the mellow fruit of those final years when he was most himself.

Chaucer's Simplicity

Chaucer was divinely gifted with that simplicity which in the beginning of language called the sky blue and the grass green. He was fortunate in being the first great poet in the English field. By this time it has become difficult to welcome summer, to say that bird-song is sweet or death final, without using language which by the use of five hundred years has worn threadbare. Chaucer was in no such plight.

> "Now welcome somer with thy sonne softe!"
> "Herken these blisful birddes how they sing!"
> "Deth is the end of every worldly sore."

Sophisticated writers may re-dress these thoughts in new and elaborate robes, but they will not bring them home to the heart with greater force. With what a hullabaloo would the Canterbury Pilgrims have been despatched upon their journey by Browning; what a high and ornate God-speed would they have received from Tennyson; Shakespeare would probably have made the weather fluctuate in sympathy with each speaker. But how infinitely natural, reposeful, delightful, is the atmosphere in which Chaucer opens the journey, in language which, like the music of Mozart, is as effective as it is quiet.

> "Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
> The droghte of Marche hath percèd to the rote,
> And bathèd every veyne in swich licour,
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
> Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
> Inspirèd hath in every holt and heeth
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,

And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open ye,
(So pricketh hem nature in hir corâges) :
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages."

The simplicity of Chaucer's style is not produced by a simple mind. That he was simple, in any dull sense of the word, is impossible by reason of his sense of humour alone.

Chaucer's Humour

The slyness of Chaucer's humour is essentially and gloriously English, and perennially fresh. Nothing in a joke of Chaucer's, except the diction, can ever go out of date. So subtle is his fun that it is hard to say whether he is laughing at his characters, his readers, or himself ; the only certainty is that he is laughing at somebody. A fine unobtrusive stroke lurks in the description of the Shipman :

"A Shipman was ther, dwelyng fer by weste :
For aught I woot, he was of Derthemouthe.
He rood upon a hackneye, as he couthe. . . ."

"As he couthe." To those who have seen the average sailor on horseback the hint is sufficient.

Then there was the Summoner to ecclesiastical courts :

"A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinne's face,
For spotted al he was, with eyen narrow.
With roughè browes blake, and shortè berd.
Of his visâge children were sore afeard."

The Summoner might have stepped from the pages of Mr. W. W. Jacobs, and been invited to "take his

face indoors to frighten his children with." Moreover, like Mr. Jacobs's characters, his conversation was influenced by refreshment :

> " Wel loved he garleek, oynouns, and eek leekes,
> And for to drinkè strong wyn red as blood.
> Then wolde he speke, and crye as he were mad.
> And when that he wel dronken had the wyn,
> Then wolde he spekè no word but Latyn.
> A fewe termès had he, two or three,
> That he had learned out of som decree ; "

And then the deft thrust :

> " No wonder is, he herde it al the day."

In spite, however, of his devotion to the grape, he has a fine knack of managing men :

> " All fooles coude he deceive ful privily.
> (And if he fond somewhere a good fellòwe,
> He woldè teche him for to have no awe
> In such case of the archedeknes curse,
> Unless a mannes soule were in his purse.)"

Then there was the Sergeant of Law :

> " A Sergeant of Lawe, wys and war,
> That often hadde ben wher lawyers are."

" Often."—Even in those days members of the bar found time for vacation.

> " Ful riche of excellence
> Discreet he was, and of gret reverence."

Presently Chaucer begins to play with the mouse :

> " He seemèd such, his wordès were so wise."

For a while the play is ominously respectful :

> " For his science, and for his high renoun,
> Of fees and robès had he many a one.
> So gret a lawyer was there nowher noon.
> Al was fee symple to him in effecte,
> His word of law might never be suspecte.
> No wher so busy a man in eny case."

At last the cat springs :

> " And yet he seemèd busier than he was."

Perhaps the richest figure of fun in the *Tales* is the Wife of Bath. It has been said that half the world marries at leisure and repents in haste, and the other half marries in haste and repents at leisure. The Wife of Bath is a genial refutation of this dismal doctrine. And if any one is entitled to an opinion on the subject it is she, who, by the time she appears, has been married no less than five times.

> " For, lordyngs, since I twelf yer was of age,
> Y-thanked be God that is eterne alive
> Housbondes atte chirch dore I have had fyve,
> For I so ofte have y-wedded be ;
> And alle were worthie men in here degree."

This connoisseur of Hymen purports " to speak of wo that is in marriage," but on her own showing, she does not seem to have fared badly. No doubt wide experience made her an adept in managing husbands.

> " I shal saye soth of housbondes that I hadde,
> As thre of hem were goode, and two were badde."

Good and bad alike were made to give satisfaction, being subjected to stern discipline, and having their noses kept fast to the grindstone :

"But synnes I had hem holly in myn hond,
And synnes thay hadde me geven al her lond,
What could I take keep hem for to please,
But it were for my profyt or myn ease ?
I sette hem so on werke, by my fay !
That many a night they songen weylaway."

On the whole the swains responded well to this régime :

"I governed hem so wel after my lawe,
That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe
To bringe me gaye thinges fro the faire !"

The fourth and fifth husbands presented the two gravest problems, but each was solved :

"My fourthe housbond was a revelour,
That is to say : he had a paramour."

This case called for drastic treatment, which was duly administered :

"For God, in erthe I was his purgatory,
For which I hope his soule be in glory."

The fifth husband seems to have been a psychologist, and profiting by the fate of his predecessor, assumed the initiative :

"Now of my fifte housbond wol I telle ;
God let his soule never come in helle !
And yet was he to me the moste schrewe,
That fele I on my ribbes alle on rewe,
And ever schal, unto myn endyng day.
. . . . . .
But, though he hadde me bete on every boon,
He couthe wynne my love right anoon.
I trowe, I loved him beste, for that he
Was of his love ful daungerous to me."

This cheerful lady, like so many of Chaucer's folk, takes the contented view that all is grist that comes to the mill. She is happy with A because she can subdue him, with B because he can subdue her. And such powers of felicity are no poor exchange for a loftier conception of life.

Chaucer's Power of Narrative

As a rule the function of humour in a work of art is to afford relief. In narrative art, variety is essential. Chaucer's sense of humour helps to make him one of the best of story-tellers. The surest way to success in story-telling is to have enthusiasm : few members of an audience are proof against a performer with a strong personality who is himself throbbing with excitement. Electric sparks radiate from the speaker and vitalize his hearers.

So fully does Chaucer realize how impossible it is for a writer to interest unless he is interested, that he is always in a panic lest he may himself lose interest :

> " I will no more speake of this matere."
>
> " What should I tell more her complaining ?
> It is so long, it were an heavy thing."
>
> " Well can Ovide her letter in verse endite,
> Which were, as now, too long for to write."

Chaucer, like Ovid, knew that a teller of stories must never allow the reader to settle down : the latter must always be kept in a state of suspense, like spectators at a cricket-match who wait to see where the ball is going next.

This narrative skill shows to supreme advantage in *Troilus and Criseyde* and in the *Tale of the Nonne Preste.* As Professor Ker has finely said of *Troilus,*

"There is nothing in the art of any narrative more beautiful than Chaucer's rendering of the uncertain, faltering, and transient moods that go to make the graceful and mutable soul of Cressida; nothing more perfect in its conception and its style than his way of rendering the suspense of Troilus; the slowly rising doubt and despair keeping pace in the mind of Troilus with the equally gradual and inevitable withdrawal and alteration of love in the mind of his lady, till he comes to the end of his love-story in Cressida's weak and helpless letter of defence and deprecation." For once Shakespeare was forestalled and beaten on ground that was to be of his own choosing. Shakespeare's *Troilus* contains individual passages which are beyond Chaucer's range. But as a work of art, rounded and complete, the poem surpasses the play.

In the *Tale of the Nonne Preste*, Chaucer mingles the humorous with the frightful. Chaunteclere's murder-dream is a masterpiece of horror. The murdered man freezes the blood in ten lines, while the ghost in *Hamlet* requires fifty:

> "Thus twies in his sleepe dremèd he
> And at the thridde time yet his felawe
> Com, as he thought, and sayd, 'I am now slane;
> Behold my bloody woundes, deep and wyde.
> Arise up erly in the morning tyde,
> And at the west gate of the town,' quot he,
> 'A carteful of donge there shalt thou see,
> In which my body is hyd ful privily;
> Arrest the cart, and that right boldely.
> My gold causèd my murdre, soth to sayn.'

Nor does Mr. Masefield's long chase after Reynard the Fox excel in excitement the twenty-two lines which Chaucer allows for the run:

> "The silly wydow, and hir doughtres two,
> Herden there hennys crie and maken wo,

And out at dores starte thay anon,
And saw the fox toward the grove gon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away ;
They criden, ' Out ! harrow and wayleway !
Ha, ha, the fox ! ' and after him thay ran,
And eek with staves many another man ;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,
And Malkyn, with a distaf in his hond ;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verry hogges
Were sore fered for berkyng of the dogges,
And showtyng of the men and wymmen eke,
Thay ronne that thay thought there herte breke.
Thay yelleden as fiendes do in helle ;
The duckes criden as men wold them kill ;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees ;
Out of the hyves cam the swarm of bees ;
So hideous was the noyse, a bencite !
Certes, Jack Straw, and al his compaignie,
Ne maden shoutes never half so shrille,
When that thay wolden eny Flemyng kille."

Though the protagonists of this Tale appear in animal form, Chaucer's psychological power is apparent. Beneath the feathers of Chaunteclere and Pertelote beat the hearts of Macbeth and his Lady.

Chaucer's Pathos

Lastly, there is Chaucer's pathos. Like all poets, he realized that with whatever equanimity, born of health or courage or natural cheerfulness, life may be faced, it is, when all is said, a grave business, and there is a great deal too much suffering in the world for any one to be able to withhold his quota of sympathy and compassion. For all Chaucer's love of gaiety, the line which he repeats most often is not a merry one : " For pity runneth soon in gentle heart." The poet's heart was gentle, and pity ran in it perpetually : pity for weakness at the mercy of power, and for human impotence in the face of invincible Fate.

Dante tells how Count Hugelino of Pisa, having been falsely accused by the Bishop of Pisa, was shut in a tower with his three children, and how they all were starved to death. Chaucer turns the story from the Italian into such English poetry as might have melted the stones of the prison :

" His yongest sone, that three yer was of age,
Unto hym sayde, ' Fader, why do ye wepe ? '
Whan wil the gayler bringen oure potage ?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye do kepe ?
I am so hongry that I may not sleepe.
Now wolde God that I might slepen ever !
Than shulde not hunger in my wombe crepe.
Ther is no thing save bred that me were liver.'
Thus day by day this child began to crie,
Til in his fadres bosom adown he lay,
And sayde, ' Far wel, fader, I must dye ! '
And kist his fader, and dyde, the same day.
And whan the fader him not helpen may,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte. . . .
His childer wende that it for hongir was,
That he his armes gnawed, and nought for wo,
And sayden, ' Fader, do nought so, allas !
But rather eet the flesh upon us two.
Oure flesh thou gave us, oure flesh take us fro,
And ete ynough ; ' right thus thay to his seyde.
And after that, withinne a day or two,
Thay layde them in his lappe adown, and deyde.
Himself despeired eek for honger starf.
Thus ended is this mighty erl of Pise ;
For his estate fortune fro him carf."

Such eloquence needs no interpretation—the pity that like a naked new-born babe strides the pages of Chaucer, as of Dickens, can only fail to move those who are deaf to all human entreaty.

Of the two best sentences that have been written on Chaucer, one is by a man, the other by a woman : Dryden wrote of the *Canterbury Tales* : " Here is

God's plenty," to which, two hundred years later, Mrs. Browning added : " Chaucer has sent us a train of pilgrims, each with a distinct individuality, apart from their pilgrimage, all the way from Southwark, and the Tabard Inn, to Canterbury and Becket's shrine : and their laughter comes never to an end, and their talk goes on with the stars, and all the railroads, which may intersect the spoilt earth for ever, cannot hush the ' tramp, tramp,' of their horses' feet."

POEMS OF CHAUCER

CHARACTERS ON HORSEBACK

The Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour ;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages) :
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes ;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,

Sote, Sweet.
Corages, Hearts.
Were seke, Were sick.
Swich licour, Such moisture.
Ferne halwes, Distant shrines of saints.

At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde ;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree ;
And eek in what array that they were inne :
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

The Knight

A Knight ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Christendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne ;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,

Esed atte beste, Entertained in the best way.
Ferther in this tale pace, Go further with this tale.
Ferre, Farther.
Bord bigonne, Taken his part at the wassail board.

No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne ; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye :
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun ;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

The Squyer

With him ther was his sone, a yong Squyer,
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,

Aryve, Landing.
Gipoun, Doublet.
Viage, Expedition.
Deliver, Active.
Maner wight, Kind of creature.
Habergeoun, Hauberk.
Crulle, Curly.
Chivachye, Military expedition.

And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day ;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

The Yeman

A Yeman hadde he, and servaunts namo
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so ;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene ;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily ;
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly :
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere ;
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene ;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Floytinge, Playing on the flute. *By nightertale*, At night.
Carf, Carved. *Pecok-arwes*, Arrows with peacocks' feathers.
Not heed, Cropped head.
Bracer, Guard for the arm in archery.

The Prioresse

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy ;
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sëynt Loy ;
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely ;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle ;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet disport,
And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte :

Cleped, Named.
Lest, Pleasure.
Ferthing, A very small portion.
Wastel-breed, Cake-bread.
Fetisly, Elegantly.
Coppe, Cup.
Raughte, Reached.

And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was ;
Hir nose tretys ; hir eyen greye as glas ;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed ;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed ;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe ;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene ;
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

The Nonne

Another Nonne with hir hadde she,

Three Preestes

That was hir chapeleyne, and Preestes three.

The Monk

A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrye,
An out-rydere, that lovede venerye ;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable :
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,

Tretys, Well-proportioned. *Yaf nat*, Cared not a jot.
A pulled hen, A plucked fowl.

That seith, that hunters been nat holy men ;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees ;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre ;
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,
As Austin bit ? How shal the world be served ?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour aright ;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight ;
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond ;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin :
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point ;
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed ;
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat ;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

The Frere

A Frere ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour, a ful solempne man.

Swinken, Toil.
Purfiled, Trimmed.
Stemed, Shone.
Leed, Lead.
Pricasour, Hard rider.
Grys, Gray squirrel.
Forneys, Furnace.
For-pyned, Wasted away (by torment).

In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun :
For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat.
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun ;
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce ;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a mery note ;
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys ;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere ;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce,

Yaf, Gave. *Avaunt*, Boast. *Farsed*, Stuffed.
Yeddinges, Songs. *Lazar*, Leper

It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse.
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous ;
And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt ;
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt ;
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.
In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge ;
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

The Marchant

A Marchant was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat ;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge alway th'encrees of his winning.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing

Poraille, Poor people.
Sho, Shoe.
Ferme, Rent.
Souninge, Relating.

Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette ;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

The Clerk

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake ;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy ;
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre ;
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

Chevisaunce, Borrowing.
Fithele, Fiddle.
Overest courtepy, Top coat.
Scoleye, Study.

The Man of Lawe

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence :
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun ;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting ;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale ;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

The Frankeleyn

A Frankeleyn was in his companye ;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.

Parvys, Church-porch. *Caas*, Cases of law.
Domes, Judgments. *Ceint*, Sash.
Wone, Custom.

An housholdere, and that a greet, was he :
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon ;
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire ;
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas and a gipser al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour ;
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

The Haberdassher and Carpenter.

An Haberdassher and a Carpenter,

The Webbe, Dyere, and Tapicer

A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapicer,
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was ;
Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,

Seint, Sir.
Luce, Pike.
Gipser, Purse.
Snewed, Abounded.
Anlas, Short two-edged dagger.
Countour, Auditor.
Vavasour, Sub-vassal, next in dignity to a baron.
Webbe, Weaver.
Tapicer, Upholsterer.
Apyked, Trimmed.

But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente ;
And elles certein were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-clept '*ma dame*,'
And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

The Cook

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones,
And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shine a mormal hadde he ;
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

The Shipman

A Shipman was ther, woning fer by weste :
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,
In a gowne of falding to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun ;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.

Yeldhalle, Guildhall.
He can, He possessed.
Shine, Shin.
Rouncy, Nag.
Deys, Dais.
Mary-bones, Marrow-bones.
Mormal, Sore.
Falding, Kind of coarse cloth.

Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lode-menage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake ;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne ;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

The Doctour

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisyk,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye ;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,
And where engendred, and of what humour ;
He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made other for to winne ;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.

Herberwe, Harbour. *Mone*, Moon.
Lode-menage, Pilotage. *Bote*, Remedy.
Letuaries, Electuaries.

Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien ;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen ;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn ;
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the bible.
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal ;
And yet he was but esy of dispence ;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

The Wyf of Bathe

A good Wyf was ther of bisyde Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to th' offring bifore hir sholde goon ;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground ;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,

Sangwin, Stuff of a blood-red colour.
Pers, Stuff of a sky-blue colour. *Scathe*, A pity.

Withouten other companye in youthe ;
But thereof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem ;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem ;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye :
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe ;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.
Of remedyes of love she knew perchaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

The Persoun

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun ;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche ;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient ;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,

Withouten, As well as. *As nouthe*, At present.
Coude, Knew. *Ofte sythes*, Oftentimes.
Lafte, Omitted.

In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, un-to sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
Hè was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisinesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

Digne, Disdainful. *Snibben*, Reprove.
For the nones, For the nonce.

The Plowman

With him ther was a Plowman, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as himselve.
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple, and my-self ; ther were namo.

The Miller

The Miller was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones ;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres ;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.

Fother, Cart-load.
Gamed, Jested.
Thikke knarre, Thickset fellow.
Cop, Top.
Swinker, Toiler.
Catel, Goods.
Harre, Hinge.

A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde ;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere and a goliardeys,
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes ;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

The Maunciple

A gentil Maunciple was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille
For whether that he payde, or took by taille,
Algate he wayted so in his achat,
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men ?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious ;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
Or live as scarsly as him list desire ;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe ;
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

Goliardeys, Buffoon.
Taille, Tally.
Achat, Purchase.
Wood, Mad.
Achatours, Caterers.
Algate, At any rate.
Lewed, Ignorant.
Hir aller cappe, Made fools of them all.

The Reve

The Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne ;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age ;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.
Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne ;
They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister ;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.

Covyne, Deceitfulness. *Mister*, Trade.

Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

The Somnour

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe ;
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd ;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Than wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree ;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day ;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Can clepen " Watte," as well as can the pope.
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye ;
Ay "*Questio quid iuris*" wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde ;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle :
Ful priveily a finch eek coude he pulle.

Sawcefleem, Covered with pimples.
Finch eek coude he pulle, Pluck a dupe.

And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs ;
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
" Purs is the erchedeknes helle," seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede ;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede—
For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth—
And also war him of a *significavit.*
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge girles of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake ;
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

The Pardoner

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he song, " Com hider, love, to me."
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex ;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres over-spradde ;
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon ;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe jet ;
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.

Erchedeknes, Archdeacon's. *Colpons*, Shreds.

His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave ;
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl :
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie ;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude ;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.
Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night,

Pilwe-beer, Pillow-case. *Gobet*, Fragment.

Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,
That ye n'arette it nat my vileinye,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere ;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large ;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother ;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde ;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette us anon ;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle ;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe :
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,

N'arette it nat, Consider it not. *Brode*, Plainly.

And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges ;
And seyde thus : " Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely :
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury ; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye ;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon ;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche."
Our counseil was nat longe for to seche ;
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
" Lordinges," quod he, " now herkneth for the beste ;
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn ;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,

Quyte, Requite. *Werken*, Act.

To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,
Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore."
This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys ;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe ; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his jugement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon ;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
With-outen any lenger taryinge.
A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde ; " Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.

A-morwe, On the morrow.

Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne ;
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight," quod he, " my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh neer," quod he, " my lady prioresse ;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,
Ne studieth noght ; ley hond to, every man."
Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight ;
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd ; what nedeth wordes mo ?
And whan this gode man saugh it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his forward by his free assent,
He seyde : " Sin I shal beginne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name !
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."
And with that word we riden forth our weye ;
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

TALE OF CHIVALRY

The Knightes Tale

[Theseus, lord of Athens, makes war on Hippolita, Queen of the Amazons, whom he brings back a captive to Thebes together with the Queen's fair sister, Emily. In another war against Creon, King of Thebes, Theseus captures two young knights of royal blood called Arcite and Palamon, whom he imprisons in Athens.]

Palamon and Arcite fall in love with Emily

. . . In a tour, in angwish and in wo,
Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.
This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe—
For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,
I noot which was the fairer of hem two—
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
She was arisen, and al redy dight ;
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, " Arys, and do thyn observaunce."
This maked Emelye have remembraunce
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse ;
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,
Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,
She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste

She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene joynant to the gardin-wal,
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene
Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, " alas ! "
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde " a ! "
As though he stongen were un-to the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,
And seyde, " Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see ?
Why crydestow ? who hath thee doon offence ?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be ;
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,

Sotil, Cunning. *Bleynte*, Started back.

Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn ;
So stood the heven whan that we were born ;
We moste endure it : this is the short and pleyn."
This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
" Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
This prison caused me nat for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse ;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse."
And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,
And seyde : " Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.
And if so be my destinee be shapen
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
Of our linage have som compassioun,
That is so lowe y-broght by tirannye."
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously :
" The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place ;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed ; ther nis namore to seye."

[Their passion turns Arcite and Palamon from friends into bitter rivals. After a time Arcite, at the request of

Sleeth, Slays.

an old friend of Theseus, is liberated from prison, but on condition that he is not seen again on Athenian ground: should he be seen, the penalty is death. Arcite returns to Thebes still desperate for love of Emily. His grief so changes his appearance that at length he returns and enters the court of Theseus under the guise of a servant. He takes the name of Philostratus, attends on Emily, and owing to his courteous demeanour is raised by Theseus to a high position of trust. After six years Palamon escapes from prison, and, while taking refuge in a wood, is found by Arcite. The rivals decide to fight a duel to settle who shall have the right to woo Emily.]

The Duel

O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyd, that love ne lordshipe
Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe;
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,
And hereth him come russhing in the greves,
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thinketh, "heer cometh my mortel enemy,
With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;

Regne, Realm. *Harneys*, Armours.
Darreyne, Decide. *Greves*, Groves.

For outher I mot sleen him at the gappe,
Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe : ”
So forden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem other knewe.
Ther was no good day, ne no saluing ;
But streight, with-outen word or rehersing,
Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
As freendly as he were his owne brother ;
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
They foynen ech at other wonder longe.
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun
In his fighting were a wood leoun,
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite :
As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.
Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle :
And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.
The destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over-al
The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn,
So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn
The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day
That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.
For certeinly, our appetytes here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to honten is so desirous,
And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde.
For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
That it is al his joye and appetyt

Forden, Feared. *Foynen*, Thrust at. *Wood*, Mad.

To been him-self the grete hertes bane :
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On hunting be they riden royally.
And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,
In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,
Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,
With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde.
And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bores two ;
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It seemed as it wolde felle an ook ;
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, " ho !
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed,
That smyteth any strook, that I may seen !
But telleth me what mister men ye been,
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-outen juge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally ? "
This Palamon answerde hastily
And seyde : " sire, what nedeth wordes mo ?
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.

Breme, Furiously. *Up peyne*, On pain. *Mister*, Sort of.

Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves ;
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge,
But slee me first, for seynte charitee ;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first ; for, though thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yeer,
And thou has maked him thy chief squyer :
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleynly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.
Therfore I axe deeth and my juwyse ;
But slee my felawe in the same wyse,
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn."
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, " This is a short conclusioun :
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede ! "
The quene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye.
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle ;

Japed, Tricked. *Juwyse*, Judgment.

For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir blody woundes wyde and sore;
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
"Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!"
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause:
And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man
Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can,
And eek delivere him-self out of prisoun;
And eek his herte had compassioun
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,
And softe un-to himself he seyde: "fy
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede,
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede
As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in swich cas can no divisioun,
But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon."
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes al on highte:—
"The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,

Debat, Quarrel.
Renneth sone, Rises quickly.
Aslaked, Softened.
Quook, Shook.

He may be cleped a god for his miracles ;
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of everich herte, as that him list devyse.
Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deeth lyth in my might also ;
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Y-broght hem hider bothe for to dye !
Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye ?
Who may been a fool, but-if he love ?
Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
Se how they blede ! be they noght wel arrayed ?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse !
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
That serven love, for aught that may bifalle !
But this is yet the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me ;
She woot namore of al this hote fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare !
But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold ;
A man mot been a fool, or yong or old ;
I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon :
For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
And therfore, sin I knowe of loves peyne,
And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas,
At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,
And eek of Emelye, my suster dere.
And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,
Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,

Cleped, Called. *Wenen*, Considered.

But been my freendes in al that ye may ;
I yow foryeve this trespas every del."
And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde :
" To speke of royal linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,
Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye ;
Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo :
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef ;
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jelous, ne so wrothe.
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape ; and herkneth in what wyse ;
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.
My wil is this, for plat conclusioun,
With-outen any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste
Frely, with-outen raunson or daunger :
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
And this bihote I yow, with-outen faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
That whether of yow bothe that hath might,
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,

Every del, Wholly. *For-thy*, Therefore.
Wykes, Weeks. *Bihote*, Promise.
Yow, Make

Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve,
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even juge been and trewe.
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.
This is your ende and your conclusioun."
Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun ?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite ?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace ?
But doun on knees wente every maner wight,
And thanked him with al her herte and might,
And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.
And thus with good hope and with herte blythe
They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne they ryde
To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

[Before the contest Palamon invokes the aid of Venus, Arcite of Mars, while Emily commits herself to Cynthia.]

The Tournament

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce,
That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
But by the cause that they sholde ryse
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wente they at night.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,

Wisly, Truly.
Ofte sythe, Often times.
Avys, Opinion.
By the cause, Because.

Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute ;
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys.
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
So uncouth and so riche, and wroght so weel
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel ;
The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures ;
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures ;
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres
Nailinge the speres, and helmes bokelinge,
Gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lacinge ;
Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel ;
The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro ;
Yemen on fote, and communes many oon
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon ;
Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes ;
The paleys ful of peples up and doun,
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Divyninge of thise Theban knightes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so ;
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd ;
Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte ;
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,
Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.
The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
With minstralcye and noyse that was maked,

Paleys, Palace.
Testers, Head-pieces.
Gigginge of, Fitting with.
Communes, Commoners.
Thikke-herd, Thick-haired.
Browding, Embroidery.
Paraments, Mantles.
Layneres, Straps.
Nakers, Kettle-drums.
Sparth, Battle-axe.
Divyninge, Guessing.

Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche
Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
Duk Theseus was at a window set,
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preesseth thider-ward ful sone
Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,
Til al the noyse of peple was y-do ;
And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,
Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.
" The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
Considered, that it were destruccioun
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this empryse ;
Wherfore, to shapen that they shul not dye,
He wol his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,
No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf
Into the listes sende, or thider bringe ;
Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,
No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde
But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere ;
Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were.
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde ;
But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
On either syde, or elles slee his make,
No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.
God spede yow ; goth forth, and ley on faste.

Y-liche, Alike. *Fet*, Brought.
Empryse, Enterprise. *Shot*, Arrow.
Stoke, Thrust. *Foyne*, Let him thrust.
Make, Equal match.

With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.
Goth now your way ; this is the lordes wille."
The voys of peple touchede the hevene,
So loude cryden they with mery stevene :
" God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccioun of blood ! "
Up goon the trompes and the melodye.
And to the listes rit the companye
By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge.
Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde ;
And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
And after that another companye
Of oon and other, after hir degree.
And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
And to the listes come they by tyme.
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ipolita the quene and Emelye,
And other ladies in degrees aboute.
Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.
And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
With baner reed is entred right anon ;
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,
With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.
In al the world, to seken up and doun,
So even with-outen variacioun,
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.
For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye,
That any hadde of other avauntage
Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.

Stevene, Voice. *Marte*, Mars. *Reed*, Red.

Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude :
" Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude ! "
The heraudes lefte hir priking up and doun ;
Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun ;
Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est
In goon the speres ful sadly in arest ;
In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde ;
Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke ;
He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte ;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
The helmes they to-hewan and to-shrede ;
Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede.
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.
Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al.
He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.
He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun,
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.
He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,
Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake,
As forward was, right ther he moste abyde ;
Another lad is on that other syde.
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.
Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo ;
Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,
So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite
For jelous herte upon this Palamoun :

Everichoon, Each one.
Herte-spoon, Concave part of the breast, where the ribs unite to form the *cartilago ensiformis*.
Sadly in arest, Firmly in rest.
Hurtleth, Dashed.

Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte ;
Out renneth blood on both hir sydes rede.
Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede ;
For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte ;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.
And in the rescous of this Palamoun
The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun ;
And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
So hitte him Palamon er he were take ;
But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.
His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught ;
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught
By force, and eek by composicioun.
Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte ?
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon
He cryde, " Ho ! namore, for it is doon !
I wol be trewe juge, and no partye.
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,
That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne."
Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
For joye of this, so loude and heigh withalle,
It semed that the listes sholde falle.
What can now faire Venus doon above ?
What seith she now ? what dooth this quene of love ?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
Til that hir teres in the listes fille ;

She seyde: "I am ashamed, doutelees."
Saturnus seyde: "Doghter, hold thy pees.
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone."
The trompes, with the loude minstralcye,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,
Been in hir wele for joye of daun Arcite.
But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon.
This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place,
Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë,
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune);
And she was al his chere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep:
And, er that Arcite may taken keep,
He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
His breast to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,
For he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alway crying after Emelye.

Bone, Boon.
Furie, Monster.
Pighte, Pitched.
Daun Arcite, Sir Arcite.
Foundred, Stumbled.
Pomel, Top.
Corven, Cut.

Death of Arcite

Duk Theseus, with al his companye,
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye;
He shal ben heled of his maladye.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon.
To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes;
Fermacies of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe night,
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
But as a justes or a tourneyinge;
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For falling nis nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take.
O persone allone, with-outen mo,
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,
It nas aretted him no vileinye,
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.
For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,

Limes, Limbs. *Unyolden*, Without having yielded.
Aretted, Imputed.

The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother ;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feste dayes three ;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely.
And hoom wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namore, but " far wel, have good day ! "
Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,
That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge.
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.
The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.
Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf,
Vomyt upward, ne dounward laxatif ;
Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun.
And certeinly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
Far-wel, phisyk ! go ber the man to chirche !
This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,
For which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere ;
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.
" Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte

Gree, Favour.
Veyne-blood, Bleeding at a vein.
Expulsif, Expellent.
Shent, Destroyed.
Bouk y-laft, Left in his body
Ventusinge, Cupping.
Voyden, Go.
Wirche, Work.
Al and som, The whole matter

Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love most ;
But I biquethe the service of my gost
To yow aboven every creature,
Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure.
Allas, the wo ! allas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe !
Allas, the deeth ! allas, myn Emelye !
Allas, departing of our companye !
Allas, myn hertes quene ! allas, my wyf !
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf !
What is this world ? what asketh men to have ?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, with-outen any companye.
Far-wel, my swete fo ! myn Emelye !
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my jelousye.
And Jupiter so wis my soule gye,
To speken of a servant proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede,
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf.
And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man."
And with that word his speche faille gan,
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deeth, that hadde him over-come.
And yet more-over, in his armes two

Poynt, Part. *Endere*, Cause of the end.
Wis my soule gye, May he guide my soul.

The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breeth.
But on his lady yet caste he his yë ;
His laste word was, " mercy, Emelye ! "
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher.
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre ;
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye ;
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.
Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe ?
For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certeinly they dye.
Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban ;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man ;
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-broght, al fresh y-slayn,
To Troye ; allas ! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.
" Why woldestow be deed," thise wommen crye,
" And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye ? "

Ago, Passed away.
Shrighte, Shrieked.
Gye, Guide.
Cracching, Scratching.
Eek, Also.

No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savinge his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse :
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.
" Right as ther deyed never man," quod he,
" That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man," he seyde,
" In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro ;
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore."
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.
Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best y-maked be,
And eek most honurable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fyr, in which th' office
Funeral he mighte al accomplice ;
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne ;
His officers with swifte feet they renne
And ryde anon at his comaundement.
And after this, Theseus hath y-sent
After a bere, and it al over-spradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.

Swote, Sweet. *On a rewe*, In a row. *Colpons*, Billets.

And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite ;
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte ;
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,
Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.
And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun.
Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heres,
In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres ;
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye,
The rewfulleste of al the companye.
In as muche as the service sholde be
The more noble and riche in his degree,
Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,
That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Up-on thise stedes, that weren grete and whyte,
Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld ;
The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys,
Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys ;
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.
The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere,
With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.
Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus,
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of honey, milk, and blood, and wyn ;

Flotery, Fluttering. *Ruggy*, Rough.
Rewfulleste, Most sorrowful. *Y-wrye*, Covered.

Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye ;
And after that cam woful Emelye,
With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do th' office of funeral servyse.
Heigh labour, and ful' greet apparaillinge
Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
That with his grene top the heven raughte,
And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte ;
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode.
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte,
As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippel-tree,
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me ;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hir habitacioun,
In which they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides ;
Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle ;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright ;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
And than with grene wode and spycerye,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, th' encens, with al so greet odour ;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is ;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse ;

Gyse, Custom.
Straughte, Stretched.
Holm, Evergreen oak.
Whippel, Cornel.
Fadme, Fathoms.
Stree, Straw.
Chasteyn, Chestnut.
Stokkes, Stumps.
Perrye, Jewellery.

Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr ;
Ne what jeweles men in the fyr tho caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste ;
Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were,
And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood ;
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryës with hir speres clateringe ;
And thryës how the ladies gonne crye ;
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye ;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde ;
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde
Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye ;
Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best, in no disjoynt.
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon ;
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

Palamon is married to Emily

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al stinted is the moorning and the teres.
Of Grekes, by oon general assent,
Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas ;
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was
To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.

Route, Company. *Liche-wake*, Watch over a corpse.
Wake-pleyes, Funeral games. *Disjoynt*, Failure.
Cas, Affairs.

For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why ;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully
He cam at his comaundemente in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he syked stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.
" The firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,
Greet was th' effect, and heigh was his entente ;
Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente ;
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee ;
That same prince and that moevere," quod he,
" Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun,
Certeyne dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place,
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge ;
Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge,
For it is preved by experience,
But that me list declaren my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
That every part deryveth from his hool.
For nature hath nat take his beginning
Of no party ne cantel of a thing,
But of a thing that parfit is and stable,

Unwist, Uninformed.
Syked, Sighed.
Allegge, Allayed.
Hust, Silent.
Abregge, Shorten.
Cantel, Portion.

Descending so, till it be corrumpable.
And therfore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
That speces of thinges and progressiouns
Shullen enduren by successiouns,
And nat eterne be, with-oute lyë :
This maistow understonde and seen at yë.
" Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge
From tyme that it first biginneth springe,
And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
" Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
The grete tounes see we wane and wende.
Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.
" Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shall a page ;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se ;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.
What maketh this but Jupiter the king ?
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
Converting al un-to his propre welle,
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.
And here-agayns no creature on lyve
Of no degree availleth for to stryve.
" Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
And namely that to us alle is due.
And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,

At yë, Evidently. *Gruccheth*, Grumbles.

And rebel is to him that al may gye.
And certeinly a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his gode name ;
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame.
And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age ;
For al forgeten is his vasselage.
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we ? why have we hevinesse,
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
Departed is, with duetee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lyf ?
Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel ?
Can he hem thank ? nay, God wot, never a deel,
That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende,
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.
" What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of al his grace ?
And, er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
O parfyt joye, lasting ever-mo ;
And loketh now, wher most sorwe is herinne,
Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.
" Suster," quod he, " this is my fulle assent,
With al th' avys heer of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might,
And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,
That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe,
And taken him for housbonde and for lord :

Apalled, Weakened. *Hevinesse*, Sadness.
Rewe, Have pity.

Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.
Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.
He is a kinges brother sone, pardee ;
And, though he were a povre bacheler,
Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It moste been considered, leveth me ;
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right."
Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right ;
" I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
To make yow assente to this thing.
Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond."
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage,
By al the counseil and the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght.
For now is Palamon in alle wele,
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele ;
And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
That never was ther no word hem bitwene
Of jelousye, or any other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye ;
And God save al this faire companye !—Amen.

TALES OF OPPRESSION

The Clerkes Tale

Part One

Ther is, at the west syde of Itaille,
Doun at the rote of Vesulus the colde,
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,

Tene, Vexation.

Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
As were his worthy eldres him bifore ;
And obeisant and redy to his honde
Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and more.
Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
The gentilleste y-born of Lumbardye,
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteisye ;
Discreet y-nogh his contree for to gye,
Save in somme thinges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considereth noght
In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde,
But on his lust present was al his thoght,
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde ;
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,
And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,
Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle.

Only that point his peple bar so sore,
That flokmele on a day they to him wente,
And oon of hem, that wysest was of lore,
Or elles that the lord best wolde assente
That he sholde telle him what his peple mente,
Or elles coude he shewe wel swich matere,
He to the markis seyde as ye shul here.

Whylom, Formerly. *Lasse and more*, High and low.
Cures, Cares. *Nolde*, Would not.
Flokmele, In a great number.

" O noble markis, your humanitee
Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
As ofte as tyme is of necessitee
That we to yow mowe telle our hevinesse
Accepteth, lord, now for your gentillesse.
That we with pitous herte un-to yow pleyne,
And lete your eres nat my voys disdeyne.

Al have I noght to done in this matere
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so dere,
Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,
I dar the better aske of yow a space
Of audience, to shewen our requeste,
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.

For certes, lord, so wel us lyketh yow
And al your werk and ever han doon, that we
Ne coude nat us self devysen how
We mighte liven in more felicitee,
Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be,
That for to been a wedded man yow leste,
Than were your peple in sovereyn hertes reste.

Boweth your nekke under that blisful yok
Of soveraynetee, noght of servyse,
Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok ;
And thenketh, lord, among your thoghtes wyse,
How that our dayes passe in sondry wyse ;
For though we slepe or wake, or rome, or ryde,
Ay fleeth the tyme, it nil no man abyde.

And though your grene youthe floure as yit,
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,
And deeth manaceth every age, and smit
In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon :
And al so certein as we knowe echoon
That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle
Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle.

Accepteth than of us the trewe entente,
That never yet refuseden your heste,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,
Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte leste,
Born of the gentilleste and of the meste
Of al this lond, so that it oghte seme
Honour to god and yow, as we can deme.

Deliver us out of al this bisy drede,
And tak a wyf, for hye goddes sake ;
For if it so bifelle, as god forbede,
That thurgh your deeth your linage sholde slake,
And that a straunge successour sholde take
Your heritage, o ! wo were us alyve !
Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve."

Hir meke preyere and hir pitous chere
Made the markis herte han pitee.
" Ye wol," quod he, " myn owene peple dere,
To that I never erst thoghte streyne me.
I me rejoysed of my libertee,
That selde tyme is founde in mariage ;
Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.

But nathelees I see your trewe entente,
And truste upon your wit, and have don ay ;
Wherfor of my free wil I wol assente
To wedde me, as sone as ever I may.
But ther-as ye han profred me to-day
To chese me a wyf, I yow relesse
That choys, and prey yow of that profre cesse.

For god it woot, that children ofte been
Unlyk her worthy eldres hem bifore ;
Bountee comth al of god, nat of the streen
Of which they been engendred and y-bore ;
I truste in goddes bountee, and therfore

Streyne, Constrain.

My mariage and myn estaat and reste
I him bitake ; he may don as him leste.

Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
That charge up-on my bak I wol endure ;
But I yow preye, and charge up-on your lyf,
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worshipe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,
As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye
Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve ;
For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve ;
And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
I prey yow, speketh na-more of this matere."

With hertly wil they sworen, and assenten
To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay ;
Bisekinge him of grace, er that they wenten,
That he wolde graunten hem a certein day
Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he may ;
For yet alwey the peple som-what dredde
Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde.

He graunted hem a day, swich as him leste,
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,
And seyde, he dide al this at hir requeste ;
And they, with humble entente, buxomly,
Knelinge up-on her knees ful reverently
Him thanken alle, and thus they han an ende
Of hir entente, and hoom agayn they wende.

And heer-up-on he to his officeres
Comaundeth for the feste to purveye,
And to his privee knightes and squyeres

Bitake, Entrust. *Sikerly*, Surely. *Purveye*, Provide.

Swich charge yaf, as him liste on hem leye ;
And they to his comandement obeye,
And ech of hem doth al his diligence
To doon un-to the feste reverence.

Part Two

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honurable
Ther-as this markis shoop his mariage,
Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,
In which that povre folk of that village
Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,
And of hir labour took hir sustenance
After that th' erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
Which that was holden povrest of hem alle ;
But hye god som tyme senden can
His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle :
Janicula men of that throp him calle.
A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to sighte,
And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Than was she oon the faireste under sonne ;
For povreliche y-fostred up was she,
No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte y-ronne ;
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank, and for she wolde vertu plese,
She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hir virginitee
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage ;

Throp, Small village. *Herbergage*, Abode.
Y-fostred, Brought up. *Tonne*, Cask.
Sad, Firm.

And in greet reverence and charitee
Hir olde povre fader fostred she ;
A fewe sheep spinning on feeld she kepte,
She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe
Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte,
The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir livinge,
And made hir bed ful harde and no-thing softe ;
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte
With everich obeisaunce and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature,
Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yë
As he on hunting rood paraventure ;
And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye,
He noght with wantoun loking of folye
His yën caste on hir, but in sad wyse
Up-on hir chere he wolde him ofte avyse,

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,
And eek hir vertu, passing any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.
For thogh the peple have no greet insight
In vertu, he considered ful right
Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde.

The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
Telle what womman that it sholde be ;
For which merveille wondred many a man,
And seyden, whan they were in privetee,
" Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee ?
Wol he nat wedde ? allas, allas the whyle !
Why wol he thus him-self and us bigyle ? "

Seeth, Boiled. *On-lofte*, Above ground.
Chere, Face. *In chere*, In look.

But natheles this markis hath don make
Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,
And of hir clothing took he the mesure
By a mayde, lyk to hir stature,
And eek of othere ornamentes alle
That un-to swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern of the same day
Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be ;
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree ;
Houses of office stuffed with plentee
Ther maystow seen of deyntevous vitaille,
That may be founde, as fer as last Itaille.

This royal markis, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
The whiche unto the feste were y-prayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Un-to the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, god woot, ful innocent,
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may.
For wel she hadde herd seyd, that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte, "I wol with othere maydens stonde,
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde

Undern, About 9 A.M. *Deyntevous*, Dainty.
Fonde, Endeavour.

To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth un-to me ;
And than I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey un-to the castel holde."

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle ;
And she set doun hir water-pot anoon
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
And doun up-on hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoghtful markis spak un-to this mayde
Ful sobrely, and seyde in this manere,
" Wher is your fader, Grisildis ? " he sayde,
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde, " lord, he is al redy here."
And in she gooth with-outen lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette.

He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde,
" Janicula, I neither may ne can
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.
If that thou vouche-sauf, what-so bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf, un-to hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man y-bore ;
And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn
It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt that I have seyd bifore,
If that thou wolt un-to that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe ? "

Sad, Grave. *Y-bore*, Born.

This sodeyn cas this man astoned so,
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking
He stood ; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
But only thus : " lord," quod he, " my willing
Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
I wol no-thing ; ye be my lord so dere ;
Right as yow lust governeth this matere."

" Yet wol I," quod this markis softely,
" That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacion, and wostow why ?
For I wol axe if it hir wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hir after me ;
And al this shal be doon in thy presence,
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience."

And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,
The peple cam un-to the hous with-oute,
And wondred hem in how honest manere
And tentifly she kepte hir fader dere.
But outerly Grisildis wondre mighte,
For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place ;
She never was to swiche gestes woned,
For which she loked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

" Grisilde," he seyde, " ye shul wel understonde
It lyketh to your fader and to me
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,

Reed, Red.
Abayst, Abashed.
Tentifly, Attentively.
Wex, Grew.
Unnethes, With difficulty.
Woned, Accustomed.

As I suppose, ye wol that it so be.
But thise demandes axe I first," quod he,
" That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse ?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And never ye to grucche it, night ne day ?
And eek whan I sey ' ye,' ne sey nat ' nay,'
Neither by word ne frowning contenance ;
Swer this, and here I swere our alliance."

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
She seyde, " lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede ;
But as ye wol your-self, right so wol I.
And heer I swere that never willingly
In werk ne thoght I nil yow disobeye,
For to be deed, though me were looth to deye."

" This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn ! " quod he.
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere
Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
And to the peple he seyde in this manere,
" This is my wyf," quod he, " that standeth here.
Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye,
Who-so me loveth ; ther is na-more to seye."

And for that no-thing of hir olde gere
She sholde bringe in-to his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there ;
Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wher-in she was clad.
But natheles this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Lust, Wish. *Smerte*, Pain. *Gere*, Apparel.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smale
A corone on hir heed they han y-dressed,
And sette hir ful of nowches grete and smale ;
Of hir array what sholde I make a tale ?
Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette
Up-on an hors, snow-whyt and wel ambling,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende
In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markisesse
God hath swich favour sent hir of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
But norished in an emperoures halle.

To every wight she woxen is so dere
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore
And from hir birthe knewe hir yeer by yere,
Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han swore
That to Janicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter nas, for, as by conjecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For thogh that ever vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellence
Of thewes gode, y-set in heigh bountee,

Nowches, Jewels.
Ladde, Conducted.
Encressed, Increased.
Unnethe, Scarcely.
Woxen, Has grown.
Thewes, Habits.

And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hir lovede that loked on hir face.

Noght only of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the bountee of hir name,
But eek bisyde in many a regioun,
If oon seyde wel, another seyde the same ;
So spradde of hir heigh bountee the fame,
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,
Gon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde.

Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,
Wedded with fortunat honestetee,
In goddes pees liveth ful esily
At hoom, and outward grace y-nogh had he ;
And for he saugh that under low degree
Was ofte vertu hid, the peple him helde
A prudent man, and that is seyn ful selde.

Nat only this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
Coude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,
But eek, whan that the cas requyred it,
The commune profit coude she redresse.
Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevinesse
In al that lond, that she ne coude apese,
And wysly bringe hem alle in reste and ese.

Though that hir housbonde absent were anoon,
If gentil men, or othere of hir contree
Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem atoon ;
So wyse and rype wordes hadde she,
And jugements of so greet equitee,
That she from heven sent was, as men wende,
Peple to save and every wrong t'amende.

Feet, Performance. *Atoon*, At one.

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild
Was wedded, she a doughter hath y-bore,
Al had hir lever have born a knave child.
Glad was this markis and the folk therfore ;
For though a mayde child come al bifore,
She may unto a knave child atteyne
By lyklihed, sin she nis nat bareyne.

Part Three

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,
Whan that this child had souked but a throwe,
This markis in his herte longeth so
To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,
That he ne mighte out of his herte throwe
This merveillous desyr, his wyf t'assaye,
Needless, god woot, he thoughte hir for t'affraye.

He hadde assayed hir y-nogh bifore,
And fond hir ever good ; what neded it
Hir for to tempte and alwey more and more ?
Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,
But as for me, I seye that yvel it sit
T'assaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
And putten her in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wroghte in this manere ;
He cam alone a-night, ther as she lay,
With sterne face and with ful trouble chere,
And seyde thus, "Grisild," quod he, "that day
That I yow took out of your povre array,
And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse,
Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.

Knave, Male. *Throwe*, Short space of time.
Assaye, Test. *Affraye*, Frighten.
Chere, Countenance.

I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,
Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be
That I yow took in povre estaat ful lowe
For any wele ye moot your-selven knowe.
Tak hede of every word that I yow seye,
Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye.

Ye woot your-self wel, how that ye cam here
In-to this hous, it is nat longe ago,
And though to me that ye be lief and dere,
Un-to my gentils ye be no-thing so ;
They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and wo
For to be subgets and ben in servage
To thee, that born art of a smal village.

And namely, sith thy doghter was y-bore,
Thise wordes han they spoken doutelees ;
But I desyre, as I have doon bifore,
To live my lyf with hem in reste and pees ;
I may nat in this caas be recchelees.
I moot don with thy doghter for the beste,
Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.

And yet, god wot, this is ful looth to me ;
But nathelees with-oute your witing
I wol nat doon, but this wol I," quod he,
" That ye to me assente as in this thing.
Shewe now your pacience in your werking
That ye me highte and swore in your village
That day that maked was our mariage."

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved
Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce ;
For, as it semed, she was nat agreved :

Wele, Happiness. *Gentils*, Gentle-folk.
Ameved, Moved.

She seyde, "lord, al lyth in your plesaunce,
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce
Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille
Your owene thing; werketh after your wille.

Ther may no-thing, god so my soule save,
Lyken to yow that may displese me;
Ne I desyre no-thing for to have,
Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;
This wil is in myn herte and ay shal be.
No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface,
Ne chaunge my corage to another place."

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drery was his chere and his loking
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go.
Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath told al his entente
Un-to a man, and to his wyf him sente.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can
Don execucioun on thinges badde.
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
In-to the chambre he stalked him ful stille.

"Madame," he seyde, "ye mote foryeve it me,
Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned;
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes hestes mowe nat been y-feyned;
They mowe wel been biwailled or compleyned,
But men mot nede un-to her lust obeye,
And so wol I; ther is na-more to seye.

Spille, Destroy.
Stille, Quietly.
Privee man, Private individual.
Y-feyned, Evaded.

This child I am comanded for to take"—
And spak na-more, but out the child he hente
Despitously, and gan a chere make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the diffame of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so
She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
But natheles she neither weep ne syked,
Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

But atte laste speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentil man,
That she moste kisse hir child er that it deyde;
And in her barm this litel child she leyde
With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse
And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys,
"Far weel, my child; I shal thee never see;
But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,
Of thilke fader blessed mote thou be,
That for us deyde up-on a croys of tree.
Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,
For this night shaltow dyen for my sake."

I trowe that to a norice in this cas
It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;
Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed "allas!"
But nathelees so sad stedfast was she,
That she endured all adversitee,

Diffame, Ill report. *Barm*, bosom. *Norice*, Nurse.

And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
" Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now," quod she, " and dooth my lordes heste,
But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace,
That, but my lord forbad yow, atte leste
Burieth this litel body in som place
That bestes ne no briddes it to-race."
But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
But took the child and wente upon his weye.

This sergeant cam un-to his lord ageyn,
And of Grisildis wordes and hir chere
He tolde him point for point, in short and playn,
And him presenteth with his doghter dere.
Somwhat this lord hath rewthe in his manere;
But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille,
As lordes doon, whan they wol han hir wille;

And bad his sergeant that he prively
Sholde this child ful softe winde and wrappe
With alle circumstances tendrely,
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But, up-on peyne his heed of for to swappe,
That no man sholde knowe of his entente,
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente;

But at Boloigne to his suster dere,
That thilke tyme of Panik was countesse,
He sholde it take, and shewe hir this matere,
Bisekinge hir to don hir bisinesse
This child to fostre in alle gentilesse;
And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde
From every wight, for oght that may bityde.

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this thing;
But to this markis now retourne we;

To-race, Tear in pieces.

For now goth he ful faste imagining
If by his wyves chere he might see,
Or by hir word aperceyve that she
Were chaunged ; but he never hir coude finde
But ever in oon y-lake sad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,
And eek in love as she was wont to be,
Was she to him in every maner wyse ;
Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she.
Non accident for noon adversitee
Was seyn in hir, ne never hir doghter name
Ne nempned she, in ernest nor in game.

Part Four

In this estaat ther passed been foure yeer
Er she with childe was ; but, as god wolde,
A knave child she bar by this Walter,
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,
Nat only he, but al his contree, merie
Was for this child, and god they thanke and herie.

Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the brest
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markis caughte yet another lest
To tempte his wyf yet ofter, if he may.
O needles was she tempted in assay !
But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,
Whan that they finde a pacient creature.

"Wyf," quod this markis, "ye han herd er this,
My peple sikly berth our mariage,
And namely, sith my sone y-boren is,

Nempned, Named. *Sikly berth*, Dislike.

Now is it worse than ever in al our age.
The murmur sleeth myn herte and my corage ;
For to myne eres comth the voys so smerte,
That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte.

Now sey they thus, ' whan Walter is agoon,
Then shal the blood of Janicle succede
And been our lord, for other have we noon ; '
Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of drede.
Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken hede ;
For certeinly I drede swich sentence,
Though they nat pleyn speke in myn audience.

I wolde live in pees, if that I mighte ;
Wherfor I am disposed outerly,
As I his suster servede by nighte,
Right so thenke I to serve him prively ;
This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly
Out of your-self for no wo sholde outraye ;
Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye."

" I have," quod she, " seyd thus, and ever shal,
I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn,
But as yow list ; noght greveth me at al,
Thogh that my doghter and my sone be slayn,
At your comandement, this is to sayn.
I have noght had no part of children tweyne
But first siknesse, and after wo and peyne.

Ye been our lord, doth with your owene thing
Right as yow list ; axeth no reed at me.
For, as I lefte at hoom al my clothing,
Whan I first cam to yow, right so," quod she,
" Lefte I my wil and al my libertee,
And took your clothing ; wherfor I yow preye,
Doth your plesaunce, I wol your lust obeye.

And certes, if I hadde prescience
Your wil to knowe er ye your lust me tolde,

I wolde it doon with-outen necligence ;
But now I woot your lust and what ye wolde,
Al your plesaunce ferme and stable I holde ;
For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese,
Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to plese.

Deth may noght make no comparisoun
Un-to your love : " and, whan this markis sey
The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun
His yën two, and wondreth that she may
In pacience suffre al this array.
And forth he gooth with drery contenaunce,
But to his herte it was ful greet plesaunce.

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,
Or worse, if men worse can devyse,
Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of beautee.
And ever in oon so pacient was she,
That she no chere made of hevinesse,
But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse ;

Save this ; she preyed him that, if he mighte,
Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,
His tendre limes, delicat to sighte,
Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.
But she non answer of him mighte have.
He wente his wey, as him no-thing ne roghte :
But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.

This markis wondreth ever lenger the more
Up-on hir pacience, and if that he
Ne hadde soothly knowen ther-bifore,
That parfitly hir children lovede she,
He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,
And of malice or for cruel corage,
That she had suffred this with sad visage.

Limes, Limbs. *Foules*, Birds.

But wel he knew that next him-self, certayn,
She loved hir children best in every wyse.
But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,
If thise assayes mighte nat suffyse ?
What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse
To preve hir wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse,
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse ?

But ther ben folk of swich condicioun,
That, whan they have a certein purpos take,
They can nat stinte of hir entencioun,
But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.
Right so this markis fulliche hath purposed
To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage ;
But never coude he finde variance ;
She was ay oon in herte and in visage ;
And ay the forther that she was in age,
The more trewe, if that it were possible,
She was to him in love, and more penible.

For which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther nas but o wil ; for, as Walter leste,
The same lust was hir plesance also,
And, god be thanked, al fil for the beste.
She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste
A wyf, as of hir-self, no-thing ne sholde
Wille in effect, but as hir housbond wolde.

The sclaundre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a povre womman wedded hadde,
Hath mordred bothe his children prively.
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.

Penible, Careful to please. *Sclaundre*, Ill-fame.

No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore
Had loved him wel, the sclaundre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hatede therfore ;
To been a mordrer is an hateful name.
But natheles, for ernest ne for game
He of his cruel purpos nolde stente ;
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.

Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse
Enformed of his wil, sente his message,
Comaunding hem swiche bulles to devyse
As to his cruel purpos may suffyse,
How that the pope, as for his peples reste,
Bad him to wedde another, if him leste.

I seye, he bad they sholde countrefete
The popes bulles, making mencioun
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,
As by the popes dispensacioun,
To stinte rancour and dissencioun
Bitwixe his peple and him ; thus seyde the bulle,
The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it had been right so ;
But whan thise tydinges cam to Grisildis,
I deme that hir herte was ful wo.
But she, y-lyke sad for evermo,
Disposed was, this humble creature,
Th' adversitee of fortune al t'endure.

Abyding ever his lust and his plesaunce,
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,

Bulles, Papal bulls.

As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce ;
But shortly if this storie I tellen shal,
This markis writen hath in special
A lettre in which he sheweth his entente,
And secrely he to Boloigne it sente.

To th' erl of Panik, which that hadde tho
Wedded his suster, preyde he specially
To bringen hoom agayn his children two
In honurable estaat al openly.
But o thing he him preyede outerly,
That he to no wight, though men wolde enquere,
Sholde nat telle, whos children that they were,

But seye, the mayden sholde y-wedded be
Un-to the markis of Saluce anon.
And as this erl was preyed, so dide he ;
For at day set he on his wey is goon
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon,
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde ;
Hir yonge brother ryding hir bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere ;
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was of age,
Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere.
And thus in greet noblesse and with glad chere,
Toward Saluces shaping hir journey,
Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

Part Five

Among al this, after his wikke usage,
This markis, yet his wyf to tempte more
To the uttereste preve of hir corage,
Fully to han experience and lore
If that she were as stedfast as bifore,

He on a day in open audience
Ful boistously hath seyd hir this sentence :

" Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough plesaunce
To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse,
As for your trouthe and for your obeisaunce,
Nought for your linage ne for your richesse ;
But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse
That in gret lordshipe, if I wel avyse,
Ther is gret servitute in sondry wyse.

I may nat don as every plowman may ;
My peple me constreyneth for to take
Another wyf, and cryen day by day ;
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake ;
And treweliche thus muche I wol yow seye,
My newe wyf is coming by the weye.

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,
And thilke dower that ye broghten me
Tak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace ;
Retourneth to your fadres hous," quod he ;
" No man may alwey han prosperitee ;
With evene herte I rede yow t'endure
The strook of fortune or of aventure."

And she answerde agayn in pacience,
" My lord," quod she, " I woot, and wiste alway
How that bitwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight can ne may
Maken comparison ; it is no nay.
I ne heeld me never digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made—
The heighe god take I for my witnesse,
And also wisly he my soule glade—

Chamberere, Maid-servant.

I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure.
Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be,
That thonke I god and yow, to whom I preye
Foryelde it yow ; there is na-more to seye.
Un-to my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwell un-to my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede
A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.
For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make.

And of your newe wyf, god of his grace
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee :
For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to be,
For sith it lyketh yow, my lord," quod she,
" That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire
As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to finde.
O gode god ! how gentil and how kinde
Ye semed by your speche and your visage
The day that maked was our mariage !

Foryelde, Requite.
Shilde, Forbid.
Widwe, Widow.
Whylom, Once.

But sooth is seyd, algate I finde it trewe—
For in effect it preved is on me—
Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat be
That ever in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.

My lord, ye woot that, in my fadres place,
Ye dede me strepe out of my povre wede,
And richely me cladden, of your grace.
To yow broghte I noght elles, out of drede,
But feyth and nakednesse and maydenhede.
And here agayn my clothing I restore,
And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore.

The remenant of your jewels redy be
In-with your chambre, dar I saufly sayn ;
Naked out of my fadres hous," quod she,
" I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.
Al your plesaunce wol I folwen fayn ;
But yet I hope it be nat your entente
That I smoklees out of your paleys wente.

Ye coude nat doon so dishoneste a thing,
That thilke wombe in which your children leye
Sholde, biforn the peple, in my walking,
Be seyn al bare ; wherfor I yow preye,
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye.
Remembre yow, myn owene lord so dere,
I was your wyf, thogh I unworthy were.

Wherfor, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,
As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my mede,
But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here

Algate, Always. *Saufly*, Safely.

That was your wyf ; and heer take I my leve
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve."

" The smok," quod he, " that thou hast on thy bak,
Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee."
But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,
But wente his wey for rewthe and for pitee.
Biforn the folk hir-selven strepeth she,
And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,
Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

The folk hir folwe wepinge in hir weye,
And fortune ay they cursen as they goon ;
But she fro weping kepte hir yën dreye,
Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.
Hir fader, that this tyding herde anoon,
Curseth the day and tyme that nature
Shoop him to been a lyves creature.

For out of doute this olde povre man
Was ever in suspect of hir mariage ;
For ever he demed, sith that it bigan,
That whan the lord fulfild had his corage,
Him wolde thinke it were a disparage
To his estaat so lowe for t'alighte,
And voyden hir as sone as ever he mighte.

Agayns his doghter hastilich goth he,
For he by noyse of folk knew hir cominge,
And with hir olde cote, as it mighte be,
He covered hir, ful sorwefully wepinge ;
But on hir body mighte he it nat bringe.
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By dayes fele than at hir mariage.

Thus with hir fader, for a certeyn space,
Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,

Voyden, Get rid of.

That neither by hir wordes ne hir face
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,
Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence ;
Ne of hir heigh estaat no remembraunce
Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in hir grete estaat
Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee ;
No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,
No pompe, no semblant of royaltee,
But ful of pacient benignitee,
Discreet and prydeles, ay honurable,
And to hir housbonde ever meke and stable.

Men speke of Job and most for his humblesse,
As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel endyte,
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
Thogh clerkes preyse wommen but a lyte,
Ther can no man in humblesse him acquyte
As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of-newe.

Part Six

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Panik come
Of which the fame up-sprang to more and lesse,
And in the peples eres alle and some
Was couth eek, that a newe markisesse
He with him broghte, in swich pompe and richesse,
That never was ther seyn with mannes yë
So noble array in al West Lumbardye.

The markis, which that shoop and knew al this,
Er that this erl was come, sente his message
For thilke sely povre Grisildis ;

Goost, Spirit. *Couth*, Known.
Shoop, Planned.

And she with humble herte and glad visage,
Nat with no swollen thoght in hir corage,
Cam at his heste, and on hir knees hir sette,
And reverently and wysly she him grette.

" Grisild," quod he, " my wille is outerly,
This mayden, that shal wedded been to me,
Receyved be to-morwe as royally
As it possible is in myn hous to be.
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his estaat in sitting and servyse
And heigh plesaunce, as I can best devyse.

I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for t'arraye in ordinaunce
After my lust, and therfor wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich maner governaunce ;
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce ;
Though thyn array be badde and yvel biseye,
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye."

" Nat only, lord, that I am glad," quod she,
" To doon your lust, but I desyre also
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree
With-outen feynting, and shal evermo.
Ne never, for no wele ne no wo,
Ne shal the gost with-in myn herte stente
To love yow best with al my trewe entente."

And with that word she gan the hous to dighte,
And tables for to sette and beddes make ;
And peyned hir to doon al that she mighte,
Preying the chambereres, for goddes sake,
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake ;
And she, the moste servisable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle.

Gost, Spirit.

Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thise noble children tweye,
For which the peple ran to seen the sighte
Of hir array, so richely biseye ;
And than at erst amonges hem they seye,
That Walter was no fool, thogh that him leste
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste.

For she is fairer, as they demen alle,
Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle,
And more plesant, for hir heigh linage ;
Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,
That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesaunce,
Commending now the markis governaunce.—

Auctor. " O stormy peple ! unsad and ever untrewe !
Ay undiscreet and chaunging as a vane,
Delyting ever in rumbel that is newe,
For lyk the mone ay wexe ye and wane ;
Ay ful of clapping, dere y-nogh a jane ;
Your doom is fals, your constance yvel preveth,
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leveth ! "

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,
Whan that the peple gazed up and doun,
For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
To han a newe lady of hir toun.
Na-more of this make I now mencioun ;
But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
And telle hir constance and hir bisinesse —

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing
That to the feste was apertinent ;
Right noght was she abayst of hir clothing,
Though it were rude and somdel eek to-rent.

Auctor, Author. *Rumbel*, Rumour.
Jane, A small coin of Genoa.

But with glad chere to the yate is went,
With other folk, to grete the markisesse,
And after that doth forth hir bisinesse.

With so glad chere his gestes she receyveth,
And conningly, everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man aperceyveth ;
But ay they wondren what she mighte be
That in so povre array was for to see,
And coude swich honour and reverence ;
And worthily they preisen hir prudence.

In al this mene whyle she ne stente
This mayde and eek hir brother to commende
With al hir herte, in ful benigne entente,
So wel, that no man coude hir prys amende.
But atte laste, whan that thise lordes wende
To sitten doun to mete, he gan to calle
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

" Grisilde," quod he, as it were in his pley,
" How lyketh thee my wyf and hir beautee ? "
" Right wel," quod she, " my lord ; for, in good fey,
A fairer say I never noon than she.
I prey to god yeve hir prosperitee ;
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende
Plesance y-nogh un-to your lyves ende.

O thing biseke I yow and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentinge
This tendre mayden, as ye han don mo ;
For she is fostred in hir norishinge
More tendrely, and, to my supposinge,
She coude nat adversitee endure
As coude a povre fostred creature."

And whan this Walter say hir pacience,
Hir glade chere and no malice at al,

And he so ofte had doon to hir offence,
And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
Continuing ever hir innocence overal,
This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse
To rewen up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse.

" This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn," quod he,
" Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayed ;
I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.
Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse,"—
And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse.

And she for wonder took of it no keep ;
She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde ;
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep,
Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.
" Grisilde," quod he, " by god that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
Ne never hadde, as god my soule save !

This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed
To be my wyf ; that other feithfully
Shall be myn heir, as I have ay purposed ;
Thou bare him in thy body trewely.
At Boloigne have I kept him prively ;
Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

And folk that otherweyes han seyd of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for t'assaye in thee thy wommanhede,
And nat to sleen my children, god forbede !
But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille."

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth
For pitous joye, and after hir swowninge
She bothe hir yonge children un-to hir calleth,
And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge
Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
She batheth bothe hir visage and hir heres.

O, which a pitous thing it was to see
Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here!
"Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow," quod she,
"That ye han saved me my children dere!
Now rekke I never to ben deed right here;
Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children mayne,
Your woful mooder wende stedfastly
That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
Hadde eten yow; but god, of his mercy,
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath doon yow kept;" and in that same stounde
Al sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde.

And in her swough so sadly holdeth she
Hir children two, whan she gan hem t'embrace,
That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee
The children from hir arm they gonne arace.
O many a teer on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that stoden hir bisyde;
Unnethe abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth, and hir sorwe slaketh;
She ryseth up, abaysed, from hir traunce,
And every wight hir joye and feste maketh,
Til she hath caught agayn hir contenaunce.

Wende, Imagined.

Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce,
That it was deyntee for to seen the chere
Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met y-fere.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,
Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon,
And strepen hir out of hir rude array,
And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coroune of many a riche stoon
Up-on hir heed, they in-to halle hir broghte,
And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
For every man and womman dooth his might
This day in murthe and revel to dispende
Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light.
For more solempne in every mannes sight
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
Liven thise two in concord and in reste,
And richely his doghter maried he
Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Itaille ; and than in pees and reste
His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage
In reste and pees, after his fader day ;
And fortunat was eek in mariage,
Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.
This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,
As it hath been in olde tymes yore,
And herkneth what this auctour seith therfore.

Costage, Expense. *Assay*, Trial.

This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,
For it were importable, though they wolde ;
But for that every wight, in his degree,
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde ; therfor Petrark wryteth
This storie, which with heigh style he endyteth.

For, sith a womman was so pacient
Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte
Receyven al in gree that god us sent ;
For greet skile is, he preve that he wroghte.
But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,
As seith seint Jame, if ye his pistel rede ;
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede,

And suffreth us, as for our excercyse,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee
Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse ;
Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,
Er we were born, knew al our freletee ;
And for our beste is al his governaunce ;
Lat us than live in vertuous suffraunce.

But o word, lordinges, herkneth er I go :—
It were ful hard to finde now a dayes
In al a toun Grisildes three or two ;
For, if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
With bras, that thogh the coyne be fair at yë,
It wolde rather breste a-two than plye.

For which heer, for the wyves love of Bathe,
Whos lyf and al hir secte god mayntene
In heigh maistrye, and elles were it scathe,

In gree, Favourably.
Pistel, Epistle.
Alayes, Alloy.
Greet skile, Good reason.
Assayes, Trials.
Plye, Bend.

I wol with lusty herte fresshe and grene
Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene,
And lat us stinte of ernestful matere :—
Herkneth my song, that seith in this manere.

From The Monkes Tale

De Hugelino, Comite de Pize

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee ;
But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he,
And with him been his litel children three.
The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.
Allas, fortune ! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage !

Dampned was he to deye in that prisoun,
For Roger, which that bisshop was of Pyse,
Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him ryse,
And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse
As ye han herd, and mete and drink he hadde
So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse,
And therwith-al it was ful povre and badde.

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,
The gayler shette the dores of the tour.
He herde it wel,—but he spak right noght,
And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght,
That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen.
" Allas ! " quod he, " allas ! that I was wroght ! "
Therwith the teres fillen from his yën.

Langour, Languishing. *Dampned*, Condemned.

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age,
Un-to him seyde, "fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage,
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe.
Now wolde god that I mighte slepen ever!
Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther is no thing, save breed, that me were lever."

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay,
And seyde, "far-wel, fader, I moot dye,"
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day.
And when the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde, "allas, fortune! and weylaway!
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!"

His children wende that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnow, and nat for wo,
And seyde, "fader, do nat so, allas!
But rather eet the flesh upon us two;
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro
And eet y-nough:" right thus they to him seyde,
And after that, with-in a day or two,
They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde.

Him-self, despeired, eek for hunger starf;
Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;
From heigh estaat fortune awey him carf.
Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffyse.
Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
That highte Dant, for he can al devyse
Fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille.

Me were lever, I had rather. *Dant*, Dante.

FABLE

The Nonne Preestes Tale

A POVRE widwe, somdel stape in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Bisyde a grove, stonding in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel and hir rente ;
By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle,
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte ;
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk ;
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce,
N'apoplexye shente nat hir heed ;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed ;
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.
A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,

Stape, Advanced. *Catel*, Wealth.
Poynaunt, Pungent. *Attempree*, A temperate.
Ey, Egg.

In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
In al the land of crowing nas his peer.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon ;
Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
Than is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun ;
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed, as it were a castel-wal.
His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shoon ;
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon ;
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith ;
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, "my lief is faren in londe."
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle

Wel sikerer, More to be trusted. *Bile*, Bill.
Toon, Toes. *Hewed*, Coloured.
Loken, Locked up.

Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him satt his faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde, "O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!"
And he answerde and seyde thus, "madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By god, me mette I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
Now god," quod he, "my swevene recche aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees."
"Avoy!" quod she, "fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!" quod she, "for, by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
I can nat love a coward, by my feith.
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?

Drecched, Troubled. *Me mette*, I dreamt.
Swevene recche, Troubled dream.

Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd ?
Allas ! and conne ye been agast of swevenis ?
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of repleccioun s,
And ofte of fume, and of compleccioun s,
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek, and of whelpes grete and lyte ;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo ;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.

Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes ?
Now, sire," quod she, " whan we flee fro the bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf ;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow ; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow ;
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love !

Arwes, Arrows. *Lemes*, Flames.
Contek, Strife. *Do no fors*, Take no account.
Prow, Profit.

Ye been ful colerik of complecciouN.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote ;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis,
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is ;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin !
Dredeth no dreem ; I can say yow na-more."
"Madame," quod he, "*graunt mercy* of your lore.
But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
That al the revers seyne of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument ;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente ;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage

Centaure, Centaury. *Fumetere*, Fumitory.
Gaytres beryis, Berries of the gay-tree or buckthorn.
Streit, Scanty.

That they ne founde as muche as o cotage
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye ;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough ;
That other man was logged wel y-nough.
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, 'allas ! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye ;
In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde ;
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep ;
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe ;
Bihold my blody woundes, depe and wyde !
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carte ful of dong ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively ;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn ; '
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe,
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe ;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way ;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,

After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, ' sire, your felawe is agon,
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
Un-to the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse ;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye :—
' My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
' That sholden kepe and reulen this citee ;
Harrow ! allas ! her lyth my felawe slayn ! '
What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn ?
The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the middel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
O blisful god, that art so just and trewe !
Lo, how that thou biwreyest mordre alway !
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable
To god, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be ;
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,
That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon,
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.

Lond, Land. *Wlatsom*, Heinous.
Pyned, Tortured. *Engyned*, Racked.
Biknewe, Confessed.

Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe nat, so have I joye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an havensyde.
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
Jolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
And casten hem ful erly for to saille ;
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day ;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus, ' if thou to-morwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt ; my tale is at an ende.'
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde him his viage for to lette ;
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
' No dreem,' quod he, ' may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and japes.
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal ;
Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,
God wot it reweth me ; and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.

For-sleuthen, Waste in sloth.

But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing ;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him expouned every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun ; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ th' avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after seen.
And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In th' olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,

Recchelees, Reckless. *Del*, Part.

Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhanged be ?
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
If thilke day he wente in-to bataille ;
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle ;
He wente for to fighte nathelees,
But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee ; and I seye forther-more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel ;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al this ;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace ;
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen ;
For, also siker as *In principio,*
Mulier est hominis confusio ;
Madame, the sentence of this Latin is—
Womman is mannes joye and al his blis.
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas !
I am so ful of joye and of solas
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem."
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle ;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Royal he was, he was namore aferd ;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun ;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture ;
And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more ;
And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
" The sonne," he sayde, " is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe ;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas."
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas ;
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.
God woot that worldly joye is sone ago ;
And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,

Kynde, Instinct. *Stevene*, Voice. *Rethor*, Orator.

As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me ;
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire ;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
That in awayt liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrer, lurking in thy den !
O newe Scariot, newe Genilon !
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe !
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes !
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
Or Boëce, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
Whether that goddes worthy forwiting

Woned, Dwelt. *Wortes*, Herbs. *Outrely*, Utterly.
Bulte it to the bren, Sift it to the bran ; *i.e.*, Work it out in detail.

Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee) ;
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or do it noght,
Though god forwoot it, er that it was wroght ;
Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necessitee condicionel.
I wol not han to do of swich matere ;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde.
Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde ;
Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
And made Adam fro paradys to go,
Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.—
But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese,
If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,
And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne ;
I can noon harm of no womman divyne.—
Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
Agayn the sonne ; and Chauntecleer so free
Song merier than the mermayde in the see ;
For Phisiologus seith sikerly.
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
But cryde anon, " cok, cok," and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.
For naturelly a beest desyreth flee

Nedely, Necessarily.

Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst had seyn it with his yë.
This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, " Gentil sire, allas ! wher wol ye gon ?
Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend ?
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
I am nat come your counseil for t'espye ;
But trewely, the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe.
For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene ;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boëce or any that can singe.
My lord your fader (god his soule blesse !)
And eek your moder, of hir gentilesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese ;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweninge ;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yën
He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,

Contrarie, Opponent.

He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee,
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?"
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos,
Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore,

Losengeour, Flatterer. *Beth war*, Beware.
For the nones, On the spur of the moment.
Gargat, Throat.

The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye ?
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,
And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage ;
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves ;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn :—
This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away ;
And cryden, " Out ! harrow ! and weylaway !
Ha, ha, the fox ! " and after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man ;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot and Gerland,
And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand ;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges
So were they fered for berking of the dogges

Shrighte, Shrieked. *Sely*, Poor.

And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
They yelleden as feendes doon in helle ;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle ;
The gees for fere flowen over the trees ;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees ;
So hidous was the noyse, a ! *benedicite !*
Certes, he Jakke Straw, and his meynee,
Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras they broghten bemes, and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
And therwithal thay shryked and they houped ;
It semed as that heven sholde falle.
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle !
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy !
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
And seyde, " Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle !
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle !
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde ;
I wol him ete in feith, and that anon."—
The fox answerde, " In feith, it shal be don,"—
And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
" Allas ! " quod he, " O Chauntecleer, allas !
I have to yow," quod he, " y-doon trespas,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd ;

Meynee, Crew.

But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente ;
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so."
" Nay than," quod he, " I shrewe us bothe two,
And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee ! "
" Nay," quod the fox, " but god yeve him meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees."
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men.
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.
Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good men ;
And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

Shrewe, Curse.

EDMUND SPENSER

From a pen-drawing by
E. Heber Thompson

EDMUND SPENSER

THE phrase of Charles Lamb, that Spenser is "the poet's poet," is appropriately quiet. Quietly Spenser stands apart from the great dramatic poets of the Elizabethan age who publicly sought the bubble reputation in the actor's mouth. It was not inexperience in affairs that kept Spenser from the theatre. His life of political service in Ireland brought him into constant contact with reality. But in his poetry he seems, for that very reason, to seek escape from the noise of the actual world, and to woo that peaceful fairyland of imagination where nothing more strident than running brooks disturbs the silence. All members of that motley audience, the public, do not appreciate such delicate music, even in a poet. They listen for the clash of brass in a strong story: excitement, suspense, mystery, a stroke of the supernatural. Such elements they will find in many of the greatest English poets: in Shakespeare and Coleridge, Byron and Browning; but they will not find them in Spenser. It is true that in *The Faerie Queene* the author planned to tell a story on an ambitious scale; but he only covered half his journey, and that at a very leisurely pace, for he was absorbed not in the incidents but in the scenery.

The Shepherd's Calendar

This meditative attitude was apparent from the first, when in 1579 *The Shepherd's Calendar* was pub-

lished. It was the natural instinct of Marlowe and Shakespeare to lay their scenes in the courts of kings : royalty appeals to the multitude apart from any poetry which kings may speak. From such conspicuous and eventful places Spenser shrank to the quiet leisure of the countryside, clothed his hero not in purple, but in a shepherd's cloak, and gave him an instrument no louder than a pipe with which to attract an audience.

" She, while she was, (that was, a woful word to sayne !)
For beauties prayse and plesaunce had no pere ;
So well she couth the Shepherds entertayne,
With cakes and cracknells, and such country chere :
Ne would she scorne the simple shepheards swaine ;
For she would cal hem often heame,
And give hem curds and clouted creame.
O heavie herse !
Als Colin Cloute she would not once disdayne ;
O careful verse !

" But nowe sike happy cheere is turned to heavie chaunce,
Such pleasaunce now displast by dolors dint :
All Musick sleepes, where death doth leade the daunce,
And Shepherds wonted solace is extinct.
The blew in black, the greene in gray is tinct ;
The gaudie girlonds deck her grave,
The faded flowres her corse embrave.
O heavie herse !
Morne nowe, my Muse, now morne with tears besprint ;
O careful verse ! "

Of such verse much may be said beside praising it. It is cast in the conventional mould of pastoral poetry fashionable at the time ; it is artificially archaic in diction, nor is it strikingly original in thought. But, since the death of Chaucer, no such music had been audible in English poetry. The song was simple ; the audience must be content with " cakes and cracknells

and such country chere " ; but to produce such a simple song is far from a simple matter. And considering that such simplicity was sustained through the twelve months in the year, it was no wonder that Spenser was hailed as the great " new poet."

Mother Hubberd's Tale

The year after the publication of the *Calendar*, Spenser received his appointment as Secretary to the Lord-Deputy of Ireland, and his removal to that country delayed for twelve years the production of his next poems. The volume appeared in 1591, and contained *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, which shows Spenser waking for a space out of country dreams to satirize contemporary politics. The poem was first written before the Irish appointment, and Spenser had not proposed to publish it : the embarrassment produced by the circulation of even a few copies in manuscript was calculated to drive the poet back to fairyland for ever.

The background of events had been as follows : Queen Elizabeth showed signs of imprisoning her fancy, and bringing her maiden meditation to an end in favour of the Duke of Anjou, a Catholic of France. The Duke's family had played a vigorous part in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, and Protestant England dreaded, and Puritan England cursed, a marriage which was likely to undo the more salutary elements in the lifework of Henry VIII. Lord Burghley was less opposed to the match than appeared safe to the country, and only the favourite, Lord Leicester, stood between England and a royal marriage with Rome. To this state of affairs Spenser addressed himself in *Mother Hubberd*, where Elizabeth appears as a lion, whose cloak and sceptre are stolen by the ape. The ape is Anjou, who proceeds to share the

spoils of government with Lord Burghley, the fox. Mercury, Lord Leicester, is finally sent by Jove, to awaken in the lion a sense of shame for thus abdicating his authority.

When idealists come to affairs they are prone to lack moderation, and Spenser's evident attack on the Queen's inclinations and the ambition of Lord Burghley was unlikely to recommend him in high places. Had he viewed noble patronage with the scorn of Dr. Johnson, this would have been no matter. But, on the contrary, he depended always for a livelihood on favour from above, and bewailed, not the system but its ineffectiveness :

"So pitiful a thing is Sutere's state.
Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to court, to sue for had ywist,
That few have found, and manie one hath mist ;
Full little knowest thou that hast not tride,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide :
To loose good dayes, that might be better spent ;
To wast long nights in pensive discontent ;
To speed to day, to be put back to morrow ;
To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow ;
To have thy Princes grace, yet want her Peeres ;
To have thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres ;
To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares ;
To eate thy heart through comfortless dispaires ;
To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undonne.
Unhappie wight, borne to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend."

Such a passage bears more testimony to Spenser's satiric power than to his worldly wisdom. It is well to write satire from a safe distance. Byron could afford to satirize the habits of George III. because, from the self-imposed seclusion of Italy, he wished nothing from him. But Spenser was offending in those very quarters to which he most looked for ad-

vancement. Considering the audacity of the Tale, it is remarkable that the author fared no worse. As it was, the favour of Lord Burghley was forfeited for life, Lord Leicester, his patron, was incensed: and when promotion came, it was not in court circles which, for all Mother Hubberd's criticism, was the poet's ambition, but to the grim exile of Ireland.

Epithalamion

Though empty of peace and riches, Ireland at least was not void of beauty; and in 1594 Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle, an Irish lady of noble birth. The story of the courtship is told in the sonnet sequence, *Amoretti*, which culminates in *Epithalamion*, the most magnificent peal of bridal music in the language. It is as easy to cast doubt on the poet's sincerity in the *Amoretti* as to question the sincerity of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Is the poet in love with an individual, or in love with love? The question is of little moment: in many a true courtship the lover may have the ideal in his mind's eye, and whether, in expressing his sentiments, he brings the halo exactly over one head or leaves it to shine in the heavens makes little difference to his song. Indeed, in such poetry as *Epithalamion* the greatness of effect comes from the sense that the nuptials of all the world are being celebrated, and that Spenser and Elizabeth Boyle are but two out of all the voices which from the beginning to the end of time have sung the glory of love.

"Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,
For to receyve this Saynt with honour dew,
That cometh in to you.
With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She cometh in before th' Almighties view;

Of her, ye virgins, learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces:
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endlesse matrimony make;
And let the roring Organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throates,
The Choristers the joyous Antheme sing,
That al the woods may answere, and their eccho ring."

The "Sutere's state" is no longer "pitiful." Excluded from the court of Elizabeth, the poet has entered that of Venus, which has no boundaries, and in which his satire is sweetened into exaltation. It is to be doubted whether English literature has any ode to show more splendid than Spenser's marriage hymn. In the deep swell of its music it sets a standard of rhythmical dignity which even Milton never surpassed. Yet with the dignity there is a fresh and spontaneous charm; the beauty of happiness, unequalled by Milton, who preferred to be good. The mild vein of bitterness apparent in *Mother Hubberd's Tale* does not again appear in Spenser's poetry. The bogs and mists of Ireland sucked satiric humours from him, or rather drew them away upon themselves.

There is no room in this little collection, which is designedly concerned with narrative, for *Epithalamion*; and it would have been sacrilege to give only extracts from it.

The Faerie Queene

Again like Milton, Spenser vented his ferocity in prose, and in his *View of the Present State of Ireland* recommends a reign of terror, the wrongs of which Gloriana's knights might have laboured for ever to redress. Fortunately for the Irish Spenser's view did not

materialize beyond a pamphlet, and his energies were thrown into the creation of the milder kingdom of the Faerie Queene.

What opinions the poet still held upon practical politics found a quiet outlet in those "Allegorical devices" in which the plot of *The Faerie Queene* is "cloudily enwrapped." So cloudy was the wrapping that here there was little danger of their harming either the poet or the objects of his censure. Rebuke cannot be taken to heart until it has been taken to mind: and even the agile intellect of Elizabethan England was mystified by this hydra-headed Allegory. The only target standing in danger was the poem itself, and it is a proof of its supreme excellence that it has carried the weight of so much entangled significance without losing anything of its appeal. Most readers act unconsciously on the advice of Hazlitt, who remarked that the allegory will not worry those who do not worry it.

Those who try to unravel the triple threads experience the fascination which belongs to a puzzle rather than to a poem. Gloriana is both Queen of Faerie Land and Queen of England; but Elizabeth cannot be circumscribed in one rôle, and must also appear as Belphœbe, Britomart, Mercilla, and Una; yet she has no royal monopoly even in her subsidiary rôles, for Britomart is also Chastity, while Una is Truth. The poet thus brings flattery to a geometrical proposition: Elizabeth=Britomart and Una who=Chastity and Truth; and two things which are equal to another must themselves be equal. Mary Queen of Scots appears as Duessa, and Duessa stands also for Deceit, that Elizabeth may further be satisfied. Arthur and Sir Calidore are kaleidoscopes, which turn bewilderingly into Leicester, and Sidney, and Essex. Thus in his fairy journeying Spenser can no more cut himself off completely from the hurly-burly of the real world than can Gulliver among the Giants and Lilli-

putians. But where Swift looks back with eyes of scorn and indignation, Spenser looks back only with regret. Allegory is mild by the side of satire. The satirist would have particular persons perfect, and is angry that they are not. The writer of allegory would have the whole world perfect, and is sorry that it is not. Swift is savage with Walpole, because he thinks that it is Walpole's fault that his government is ineffective. But when Spenser arraigns the abstract vices, he is calling to account, not man, but the universal spirit of evil, which being intangible, is not amenable to correction.

But if the poet even in so distant a realm as that of Gloriana, where right will always conquer, finds it hard to forget the politics of Elizabethan England, where the victories of righteousness were less automatic, the average reader is content to keep his eyes straight forward, and to steep his senses in romance. The scenery of the poem is like richly wrought tapestry on which incidents unfold themselves with unperturbed pace. There is infinite digression, but the endless ramifications of the plot are woven into one harmony by the magic splendour of the setting. To the expression of his naturally opulent imagination the poet brings every technical device that will secure warmth and colour. The flavour of archaic language which in *The Shepherd's Calendar* had not been received with unmixed favour by the critics, is elaborated in *The Faerie Queene* to a point where Ben Jonson made his famous complaint that Spenser "writ no language." When a word in contemporary use does not produce the necessary colour, Spenser revives one that is obsolete, and if that will not serve, he invents a new word on some ancient analogy.

Of the sensuous art of alliteration he makes abundant and subtle use. So instinctively does his mind move in rich music, that inevitably his shields are silver, his ladies lovely, his gifts goodly, his wilder-

nesses wild. A keen ear, in addition to the eye, is necessary to appreciate the sustained onomatopœic effect, wrought by alliteration upon *f* and *s* and *l*, with which in the address of Despair, in the Ninth Canto of Book I., the sense is suggested of gradual sliding into peace after storm:

"He there does now enjoy eternall rest
And happy ease, which thou doest want and crave,
And further from it daily wanderest:
What if some little payne the passage have,
That makes frayle flesh to feare the bitter wave,
Is not short payne well borne, that bringes long ease,
And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet grave?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please."

The famous Alexandrine with which each stanza closes is equally effective to produce a feeling, as here, of quiet consummation, or to lead the music-story on without interruption: and in either case it breaks, after every eight lines, with the full sound of the ninth wave.

"Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,
Such as attonce might not on living ground,
Save in this Paradise, be heard elswhere:
Right hard it was, for wight, which did it heare,
To read, what manner musicke that mote bee:
For all that pleasing is to living eare,
Was there consorted in one harmonee,
Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.

The joyous birdes shrouded in cheareful shade,
Their notes unto the voyce attempred sweet;
Th' Angelicall soft trembling voyces made
To th' instruments divine respondence meet:
The silver sounding instruments did meet

With the base murmure of the waters fall :
The waters fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call :
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all."

The scene is the Bower of Bliss, where Sir Guyon overpowers the false Acrasia and destroys her bower ; these sounds of unearthly beauty accompany the sensous temptations which the knight resists. But if Sir Guyon must be proof against Acrasia's magic there is no need for the reader to resist the magic of Spenser, and two such stanzas are typical of the incomparable beauty in which stanza after stanza, and book after book, are unflaggingly clothed. The story is in praise of the white radiance of virtue, but Spenser brings to the service of the lily, the beauty of the rose. Guyon struggles with Acrasia, the Red Cross Knight with the Dragon, Artegall with the Giant, amid scenes of natural loveliness unsurpassed even in the Eden of *Paradise Lost.*

The more serious-minded of Spenser's interpreters have held it wrong to enjoy the " poetic luxury " of *The Faerie Queene* apart from its moral significance. They have pointed out that the slaughter of Error by the Red Cross Knight is repulsive apart from its symbolic nature, the iron Talus with his iron flail is a revolting monster unless regarded as a righteous executioner, the Blatant Beast a pantomime absurdity if he does not personify scandal. Such a view is to preserve one source of appeal in the poem by depriving it of another. Moral and political symbolism is attractive only to a limited number of the solemn ; but the appeal of a fairy story is as wide as human thirst for romance, and, taken and enjoyed as such, no incident in the story can be too bloodcurdling, no villain too monstrous. And probably those readers derive most from Spenser who first approach *The Faerie Queene* for a fairy story, as children approach

Hamlet for the ghost, or *Alice in Wonderland* for nonsense: and as years admit them into the philosophy of Hamlet, and the wit of Alice, so they will come gradually to appreciate the deeper qualities of Spenser. Foremost among these they will find the poet's passion to portray an ideal knight of chivalry, or in more homely language, his ideal of an Elizabethan gentleman. In such a conception, like the other poets of his age, he soared above reality: Prince Arthur must have the courage of Drake without his ruthlessness, the tenacity of Raleigh without his choler, the charm of Sidney without his ineffectiveness.

It is over three hundred years since *The Faerie Queene* appeared, but the battle between Una and Duessa is still to finish. In the age of Renaissance and discovery the end may well have seemed nearer than it does now. The country had woken like a giant out of the sleep of the Middle Ages, and all things seemed possible. If Drake could circumnavigate the world and frustrate the Armada in fact, it is little wonder that on mere paper Tamburlaine should aspire after omnipotence. And if Sidney could perfectly practise the life of chivalry, it is natural that the knights of Gloriana should set an ideal standard of conduct relative both in strength and virtue to the custom of the times.

"The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, untill it forth have brought
Th' eternall brood of glorie excellent:
Such restlesse passion did all night torment
The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
Devizing, how that doughtie turnament
With greatest honour he atchieven might;
Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light."

"Such restlesse passion" tormented those contemporaries of Spenser, who set England on the path of

greatness, and whether since then the path has gone up or down, the knights of Gloriana have remained an abiding inspiration. Moreover, those who are apt to find the inculcation of moral virtues a cold experience, may search literature in vain to find that lesson taught as sumptuously as in the pages of Spenser.

"For all that pleasing is to living eare,
Is there consorted in one harmonee:
Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters, all agree."

POEMS OF SPENSER

CHARACTERS ON HORSEBACK

Duessa's Counsellors

(From *The Faerie Queene*, Book I., Canto iv.)

1

SUDDEIN vpriseth from her stately place
The royall Dame, and for her coche doth call:
All hurtlen forth, and she with Princely pace,
As faire *Aurora* in her purple pall,
Out of the East the dawning day doth call:
So forth she comes: her brightnesse brode doth blaze;
The heapes of people thronging in the hall,
Do ride each other, vpon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitter and light doth all mens eyes amaze.

2

So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme,
Adorned all with gold, and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as *Flora* in her prime,
And stroue to match, in royall rich array,
Great *Iunoes* golden chaire, the which they say

Brode, Afar.

The Gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
To *Ioues* high house through heauens braspaued way
Drawne of faire Pecocks, that excell in pride,
And full of *Argus* eyes their tailes dispredden wide.

3

But this was drawne of six vnequall beasts,
On which her six sage Counsellours did ryde,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kinds applyde :
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish *Idlenesse* the nourse of sin ;
Vpon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde,
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin,
Like to an holy Monck, the seruice to begin.

4

And in his hand his Portesse still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little red,
For of deuotion he had little care,
Still drownd in sleepe, and most of his dayes ded ;
Scarse could he once vphold his heauie hed,
To looken, whether it were night or day :
May seeme the wayne was very euill led,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not, whether right he went, or else astray.

5

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne,
And greatly shunned manly exercise,
From euery worke he chalenged essoyne,
For contemplation sake : yet otherwise,
His life he led in lawlesse riotise ;

Amis, Cape. *Portesse*, Portable breviary.
Esloyne, Withdraw. *Essoyne*, Exemption.

By which he grew to grieuous malady ;
For in his lustlesse limbs through euill guise
A shaking feuer raignd continually :
Such one was *Idlenesse*, first of this company.

6

And by his side rode loathsome *Gluttony*,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne,
His belly was vp-blowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne,
And like a Crane his necke was long and fyne,
With which he swallowd vp excessiue feast,
For want wherof poore people oft did pyne ;
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued vp his gorge, that all did him deteast.

7

In greene vine leaues he was right fitly clad ;
For other clothes he could not weare for heat,
And on his head an yuie girland had,
From vnder which fast trickled downe the sweat :
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His dronken corse he scarse vpholden can,
In shape and life more like a monster, then a man.

8

Vnfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke vnhable once to stirre or go,
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so,
That from his friend he seldome knew his fo :
Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
And a dry dropsie through his flesh did flow :
Which by misdiet daily greater grew :
Such one was *Gluttony*, the second of that crew.

9

And next to him rode lustfull *Lechery*,
Vpon a bearded Goat, whose rugged haire,
And whally eyes (the signe of gelosy,)
Was like the person selfe, whom he did beare :
Who rough, and blacke, and filthy did appeare,
Vnseemely man to please faire Ladies eye ;
Yet he of Ladies oft was loued deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by :
O who does know the bent of womens fantasy ?

10

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which vnderneath did hide his filthinesse,
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies, and new fanglenesse :
For he was false, and fraught with ficklenesse,
And learned had to loue with secret lookes,
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulnesse,
And fortunes tell, and read in louing bookes,
And thousand other wayes, to bait his fleshly hookes.

11

Inconstant man, that loued all he saw,
And lusted after all, that he did loue,
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But ioyd weake wemens hearts to tempt and proue
If from their loyall loues he might then moue ;
Which lewdnesse fild him with reprochfull paine
Of that fowle euill, which all men reproue,
That rots the marrow, and consumes the braine :
Such one was *Lecherie*, the third of all this traine.

Whally, Having a greenish tinge.

12

And greedy *Auarice* by him did ride,
Vpon a Camell loaden all with gold ;
Two iron coffers hong on either side,
With precious mettall full, as they might hold,
And in his lap an heape of coine he told ;
For of his wicked pelfe his God he made,
And vnto hell him selfe for money sold ;
Accursed vsurie was all his trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

13

His life was nigh vnto deaths doore yplast,
And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes he ware,
Ne scarse good morsell all his life did tast,
But both from backe and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare ;
Yet chylde ne kinsman liuing had he none
To leaue them to ; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life vnto him selfe vnknowne.

14

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise,
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store,
Whose need had end, but no end couetise,
Whose wealth was want, whose plenty made him pore,
Who had enough, yet wished euer more ;
A vile disease, and eke in foote and hand
A grieuous gout tormented him full sore,
That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand :
Such one was *Auarice*, the fourth of this faire band.

Couetise, Covetousness.

15

And next to him malicious *Enuie* rode,
Vpon a rauenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Betweene his cankred teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his chaw ;
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw
At neighbours wealth, that made him euer sad ;
For death it was, when any good he saw,
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had,
But when he heard of harme, he wexed wondrous glad.

16

All in a kirtle of discolourd say
He clothed was, ypainted full of eyes ;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull Snake, the which his taile vptyes
In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.
Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
Those heapes of gold with griple Couetyse,
And grudged at the great felicitie
Of proud *Lucifera*, and his owne companie.

17

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
And him no lesse, that any like did vse,
And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse ;
So euery good to bad he doth abuse :
And eke the verse of famous Poets witt
He does backebite, and spightfull poison spues
From leprous mouth on all, that euer writt :
Such one vile *Enuie* was, that fifte in row did sitt.

Say, A cloth of fair texture resembling serge.
Griple, Grasping.

18

And him beside rides fierce reuenging *Wrath*,
Vpon a Lion, loth for to be led;
And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed;
His eyes did hurle forth sparkles fiery red,
And stared sterne on all, that him beheld,
As ashes pale of hew and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, when choler in him sweld.

19

His ruffin raiment all was staind with blood,
Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
Through vnaduized rashnesse woxen wood;
For of his hands he had no gouernement,
Ne car'd for bloud in his auengement:
But when the furious fit was ouerpast,
His cruell facts he often would repent;
Yet wilfull man he neuer would forecast,
How many mischieues should ensue his heedlesse hast.

20

Full many mischiefes follow cruell *Wrath*;
Abhorred bloudshed, and tumultuous strife,
Vnmanly murder, and vnthrifty scath,
Bitter despight, with rancour's rusty knife,
And fretting griefe the enemy of life;
All these, and many euils moe haunt ire,
The swelling Splene, and Frenzy raging rife,
The shaking Palsey, and Saint *Fraunces* fire:
Such one was *Wrath*, the last of this vngodly tire.

Wood, Mad. *Scath*, Harm.

21

And after all, vpon the wagon beame
Rode *Sathan*, with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesie teme,
So oft as *Slowth* still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Showting for ioy, and still before their way
A foggy mist had couered all the land ;
And vnderneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculs and bones of men, whose life had gone astray.

TALES OF CHIVALRY

The Redcross Knight fights the Dragon

(From *The Faerie Queene*, Book I., Canto xi.)

1

High time now gan it wex for *Vna* faire,
To thinke of those her captiue Parents deare,
And their forwasted kingdome to repaire :
Whereto whenas they now approched neare,
With hartie words her knight she gan to cheare,
And in her modest manner thus bespake ;
Deare knight, as deare, as euer knight was deare,
That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heauen behold the tedious toyle, ye for me take.

2

Now are we come vnto my natiue soyle,
And to the place, where all our perils dwell ;
Here haunts that feend, and does his dayly spoyle,

Forwasted, Ravaged.

Therefore henceforth be at your keeping well,
And euer ready for your foeman fell.
The sparke of noble courage now awake,
And striue your excellent selfe to excell ;
That shall ye euermore renowmed make,
Aboue all knights on earth, that batteill vndertake.

3

And pointing forth, lo yonder is (said she)
The brasen towre in which my parents deare
For dread of that huge feend emprisond be,
Whom I from far see on the walles appeare,
Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare :
And on the top of all I do espye
The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare,
That O my parents might I happily
Vnto you bring, to ease you of your misery.

4

With that they heard a roaring hideous sound,
That all the ayre with terrour filled wide,
And seemd vneath to shake the stedfast ground.
Eftsoones that dreadfull Dragon they espide,
Where stretcht he lay vpon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill.
But all so soone, as he from far descride
Those glistring armes, that heauen with light did fill,
He rousd himselfe full blith, and hastned them vntill.

5

Then bad the knight his Lady yede aloofe,
And to an hill her selfe withdraw aside,
From whence she might behold that battailles proof
And eke be safe from daunger far descryde :

Yede, Go.

She him obayd, and turnd a little wyde.
Now O thou sacred Muse, most learned Dame,
Faire ympe of *Phœbus*, and his aged bride,
The Nourse of time, and euerlasting fame,
That warlike hands ennoblest with immortall name ;

6

O gently come into my feeble brest,
Come gently, but not with that mighty rage,
Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest,
And harts of great Heroës doest enrage,
That nought their kindled courage may aswage,
Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to sownd ;
The God of warre with his fiers equipage
Thou doest awake, sleepe neuer he so sownd,
And scared nations doest with horrour sterne astownd.

7

Faire Goddesse lay that furious fit aside,
Till I of warres and bloudy *Mars* do sing,
And Briton fields with Sarazin bloud bedyde,
Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim king,
That with their horrour heauen and earth did ring,
A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse :
But now a while let downe that haughtie string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.

8

By this the dreadfull Beast drew nigh to hand,
Halfe flying, and halfe footing in his hast,
That with his largenesse measured much land,
And made wide shadow vnder his huge wast ;
As mountaine doth the valley ouercast.
Approching nigh, he reared high afore
His body monstrous, horrible, and vast,

Which to increase his wondrous greatnesse more,
Was swolne with wrath, and poyson, and with bloudy gore.

9

And ouer, all with brasen scales was armd,
Like plated coate of steele, so couched neare,
That nought mote perce, ne might his corse be harmd
With dint of sword, nor push of pointed speare ;
Which as an Eagle, seeing pray appeare,
His aery plumes doth rouze, full rudely dight,
So shaked he, that horrour was to heare,
For as the clashing of an Armour bright,
Such noyse his rouzed scales did send vnto the knight.

10

His flaggy wings when forth he did display,
Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way :
And eke the pennes, that did his pineons bynd,
Were like mayne-yards, with flying canuas lynd,
With which whenas him list the ayre to beat,
And there by force vnwonted passage find,
The cloudes before him fled for terrour great,
And all the heauens stood still amazed with his threat.

11

His huge long tayle wound vp in hundred foldes,
Does ouerspred his long bras-scaly backe,
Whose wreathed boughts when euer he vnfoldes,
And thicke entangled knots adown does slacke,
Bespotted as with shields of red and blacke,
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
And of three furlongs does but litle lacke ;
And at the point two stings in-fixed arre,
Both deadly sharpe, that sharpest steele exceeden farre.

Pennes, Feathers. *Boughts*, Coils.

12

But stings and sharpest steele did far exceed
The sharpnesse of his cruell rending clawes ;
Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
What euer thing does touch his rauenous pawes,
Or what within his reach he euer drawes.
But his most hideous head my toung to tell
Does tremble : for his deepe deuouring iawes
Wide gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
Through which into his darke abisse all rauin fell.

13

And that more wondrous was, in either iaw
Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were,
In which yet trickling bloud and gobbets raw
Of late deuoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bred cold congealed feare :
Which to increase, and all atonce to kill,
A cloud of smothering smoke and sulphur seare
Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed still,
That all the ayre about with smoke and stench did fill.

14

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shields,
Did burne with wrath, and sparkled liuing fyre ;
As two broad Beacons, set in open fields,
Send forth their flames farre off to euery shyre,
And warning giue, that enemies conspyre,
With fire and sword the region to inuade ;
So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous yre :
But farre within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lampes were set, that made a dreadfull shade.

15

So dreadfully he towards him did pas,
Forelifting vp aloft his speckled brest,

And often bounding on the brused gras,
As for great ioyance of his newcome guest.
Eftsoones he gan aduance his haughtie crest,
As chaufted Bore his bristles doth vpreare,
And shoke his scales to battell readie drest ;
That made the *Redcrosse* knight nigh quake for feare,
As bidding bold defiance to his foeman neare.

16

The knight gan fairely couch his steadie speare,
And fiercely ran at him with rigorous might :
The pointed steele arriuing rudely theare,
His harder hide would neither perce, nor bight,
But glauncing by forth passed forward right ;
Yet sore amoued with so puissant push,
The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely passing by, did brush
With his long tayle, that horse and man to ground did rush.

17

Both horse and man vp lightly rose againe,
And fresh encounter towards him addrest :
But th' idle stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious beast,
To be auenged of so great despight ;
For neuer felt his imperceable brest
So wondrous force, from hand of liuing wight ;
Yet had he prou'd the powre of many a puissant knight.

18

Then with his wauing wings displayed wyde,
Himselfe vp high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong flight did forcibly diuide
The yielding aire, which nigh too feeble found

Her flitting partes, and element vnsound,
To beare so great a weight : he cutting way
With his broad sayles, about him soared round :
At last low stouping with vnweldie sway,
Snatcht vp both horse and man, to beare them quite away.

19

Long he them bore aboue the subiect plaine,
So farre as Ewghen bow a shaft may send,
Till struggling strong did him at last constraine,
To let them downe before his flightes end :
As hagard hauke presuming to contend
With hardie fowle, aboue his hable might,
His wearie pounces all in vaine doth spend,
To trusse the pray too heauie for his flight ;
Which comming downe to ground, does free it selfe by fight.

20

He so disseized of his gryping grosse,
The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd
In his bras-plated body to embosse,
And three mens strength vnto the stroke he layd ;
Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked, as affrayd.
And glauncing from his scaly necke, did glyde
Close vnder his left wing, then broad displayd.
The percing steele there wrought a wound full wyde,
That with the vncouth smart the Monster lowdly cryde.

21

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore,
When wintry storme his wrathfull wreck does threat,
The rolling billowes beat the ragged shore,
As they the earth would shoulder from her seat,

Hable, Powerful.

And greedie gulfe does gape, as he would eat
His neighbour element in his reuenge :
Then gin the blustring brethren boldly threat,
To moue the world from off his stedfast henge,
And boystrous battell make, each other to auenge.

22

The steelv head stucke fast still in his flesh,
Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the wood,
And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed fresh
A gushing riuer of blacke goarie blood,
That drowned all the land, whereon he stood ;
The streame thereof would driue a water-mill.
Trebly augmented was his furious mood
With bitter sense of his deepe rooted ill,
That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nose-thrill.

23

His hideous tayle then hurled he about,
And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thyes
Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
Striuing to loose the knot, that fast him tyes,
Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash implyes,
That to the ground he is perforce constraynd
To throw his rider : who can quickly ryse
From off the earth, with durty bloud distaynd,
For that reprochfull fall right fowly he disdaynd.

24

And fiercely tooke his trenchand blade in hand,
With which he stroke so furious and so fell,
That nothing seemd the puissance could withstand :
Vpon his crest the hardned yron fell,
But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
That deeper dint therein it would not make ;
Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell,

Nose-thrill, Nostril.

That from thenceforth he shund the like to take,
But when he saw them come, he did them still forsake.

25

The knight was wrath to see his stroke beguyld,
And smote againe with more outrageous might ;
But backe againe the sparckling steele recoyld,
And left not any marke, where it did light ;
As if in Adamant rocke it had bene pight.
The beast impatient of his smarting wound,
And of so fierce and forcible despight,
Thought with his wings to stye aboue the ground ;
But his late wounded wing vnseruiceable found.

26

Then full of griefe and anguish vehement,
He lowdly brayd, that like was neuer heard,
And from his wide deuouring ouen sent
A flake of fire, that flashing in his beard,
Him all amazd, and almost made affeard :
The scorching flame sore swinged all his face,
And through his armour all his bodie seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,
But thought his armes to leaue, and helmet to vnlace.

27

Not that great Champion of the antique world,
Whom famous Poetes verse so much doth vaunt,
And hath for twelue huge labours high extold,
So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt,
When him the poysoned garment did enchaunt
With *Centaures* bloud, and bloudie verses charm'd,
As did this knight twelue thousand dolours daunt,
Whom fyrie steele now burnts that earst him arm'd,
That erst him goodly arm'd, now most of all him harm'd.

Pight, Placed. *Stye*, Mount.

28

Faint, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieued, brent
With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, and inward fire
That neuer man such mischiefes did torment ;
Death better were, death did he oft desire,
But death will neuer come, when needes require.
Whom so dismayd when that his foe beheld,
He cast to suffer him no more respire,
But gan his sturdie sterne about to weld,
And him so strongly stroke, that to the ground him feld.

29

It fortuned (as faire it then befell)
Behind his backe vnweeting, where he stood,
Of auncient time there was a springing well,
From which fast trickled forth a siluer flood,
Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good.
Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got
That happie land, and all with innocent blood
Defyld those sacred waues, it rightly hot
The well of life, ne yet his vertues had forgot.

30

For vnto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away,
Those that with sicknesse were infected sore,
It could recure, and aged long decay
Renew, as one were borne that very day.
Both *Silo* this, and *Iordan* did excell,
And th' English *Bath*, and eke the german *Spau*,
Ne can *Cephise*, nor *Hebrus* match this well :
Into the same the knight backe ouerthrowen, fell.

Hot, Was called.

31

Now gan the golden *Phœbus* for to steepe
His fierie face in billowes of the west,
And his faint steedes watred in Ocean deepe,
Whiles from their iournall labours they did rest,
When that infernall Monster, hauing kest
His wearie foe into that liuing well,
Can high aduance his broad discoloured brest,
Aboue his wonted pitch, with countenance fell,
And clapt his yron wings, as victor he did dwell.

32

Which when his pensiue Ladie saw from farre,
Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
As weening that the sad end of the warre,
And gan to highest God entirely pray,
That feared chance from her to turne away ;
With folded hands and knees full lowly bent
All night she watcht, ne once adowne would lay
Her daintie limbs in her sad dreriment,
But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

33

The morrow next gan early to appeare,
That *Titan* rose to runne his daily race ;
But early ere the morrow next gan reare
Out of the sea faire *Titans* deawy face,
Vp rose the gentle virgin from her place,
And looked all about, if she might spy
Her loued knight to moue his manly pace :
For she had great doubt of his safety,
Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

Kest, Cast.

34

At last she saw, where he vpstarted braue
Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay ;
As Eagle fresh out of the Ocean waue,
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary grey,
And deckt himselfe with feathers youthly gay,
Like Eyas hauke vp mounts vnto the skies,
His newly budded pineons to assay,
And marueiles at himselfe, still as he flies :
So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise.

35

Whom when the damned feend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
And doubted, whether his late enemy
It were, or other new supplied knight.
He, now to proue his late renewed might,
High brandishing his bright deaw-burning blade,
Vpon his crested scalpe so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it made :
The deadly dint his dulled senses all dismaid.

36

I wote not, whether the reuenging steele
Were hardned with that holy water dew,
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
Or his baptized hands now greater grew ;
Or other secret vertue did ensew ;
Else neuer could the force of fleshly arme,
Ne molten mettall in his bloud embrew :
For till that stownd could neuer wight him harme,
By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.

Stownd, Moment.

37

The cruell wound enraged him so sore,
That loud he yelled for exceeding paine ,
As hundred ramping Lyons seem'd to rore,
Whom rauenous hunger did thereto constraine :
Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched traine,
And therewith scourge the buxome aire so sore,
That to his force to yeelden it was faine ;
Ne ought his sturdie strokes might stand afore,
That high trees ouerthrew, and rocks in peeces tore.

38

The same aduauncing high aboue his head,
With sharpe intended sting so rude him smot,
That to the earth him droue, as stricken dead,
Ne liuing wight would haue him life behot :
The mortall sting his angry needle shot
Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seasd,
Where fast it stucke, ne would there out be got :
The griefe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd,
Ne might his ranckling paine with patience be appeasd

39

But yet more mindfull of his honour deare,
Then of the grieuous smart, which him did wring,
From loathed soile he can him lightly reare,
And stroue to loose the farre infixed sting :
Which when in vaine he tryde with struggeling,
Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he heft,
And strooke so strongly, that the knotty string
Of his huge taile he quite a sunder cleft,
Fiue ioynts thereof he hewd, and but the stump him left.

40

Hart cannot thinke, what outrage, and what cryes,
With foule enfouldred smoake and flashing fire,
The hell-bred beast threw forth vnto the skyes,
That all was couered with darknesse dire :
Then fraught with rancour, and engorged ire,
He cast at once him to auenge for all,
And gathering vp himselfe out of the mire,
With his vneuen wings did fiercely fall
Vpon his sunne-bright shield, and gript it fast withall.

41

Much was the man encombred with his hold,
In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
Ne wist yet, how his talants to vnfold ;
Nor harder was from *Cerberus* greedie iaw
To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw
To reaue by strength the griped gage away :
Thrise he assayd it from his foot to draw,
And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay,
It booted nought to thinke, to robbe him of his pray.

42

Tho when he saw no power might preuaile,
His trustie sword he cald to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiercely did his foe assaile,
And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid ;
As sparckles from the Anduile vse to fly,
When heauie hammers on the wedge are swaid ;
Therewith at last he forst him to vnty
One of his grasping feete, him to defend thereby.

Reaue, Release.

43

The other foot, fast fixed on his shield,
Whenas no strength, nor stroks mote him constraine
To loose, ne yet the warlike pledge to yield,
He smot thereat with all his might and maine,
That nought so wondrous puissance might sustaine;
Vpon the ioynt the lucky steele did light,
And made such way, that hewd it quite in twaine;
The paw yet missed not his minisht might,
But hong still on the shield, as it at first was pight.

44

For griefe thereof, and diuelish despight,
From his infernall fournace forth he threw
Huge flames, that dimmed all the heauens light,
Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew;
As burning *Aetna* from his boyling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces broke,
And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
Enwrapt in coleblacke clouds and filthy smoke,
That all the land with stench, and heauen with horror choke.

45

The heate whereof, and harmefull pestilence
So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To saue his bodie from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrailes did expire.
It chaunst (eternall God that chaunce did guide)
As he recoyled backward, in the mire
His nigh forwearied feeble feet did slide,
And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide.

46

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosie red,
As they in pure vermilion had beene dide,
Whereof great vertues ouer all were red :
For happie life to all, which thereon fed,
And life eke euerlasting did befall :
Great God it planted in that blessed sted
With his almightie hand, and did it call
The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

47

In all the world like was not to be found,
Saue in that soile, where all good things did grow,
And freely sprong out of the fruitfull ground,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dread Dragon all did ouerthrow.
Another like faire tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof who so did eat, eftsoones did know
Both good and ill : O mornefull memory :
That tree through one mans fault hath doen vs all to dy.

48

From that first tree forth flowd, as from a well,
A trickling streame of Balme, most soueraine
And daintie deare, which on the ground still fell,
And ouerflowed all the fertill plaine,
As it had deawed bene with timely raine :
Life and long health that gratious ointment gaue,
And deadly woundes could heale, and reare againe
The senselesse corse appointed for the graue.
Into that same he fell : which did from death him saue.

Crime, (Criminal) cause.

49

For nigh thereto the euer damned beast
Durst not approch, for he was deadly made,
And all that life preserued, did detest :
Yet he it oft aduentur'd to inuade.
By this the drouping day-light gan to fade,
And yeeld his roome to sad succeeding night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth, and wayes of liuing wight,
And high her burning torch set vp in heauen bright.

50

When gentle *Vna* saw the second fall
Of her deare knight, who wearie of long fight,
And faint through losse of bloud, mou'd not at all,
But lay as in a dreame of deepe delight,
Besmeard with pretious Balme, whose vertuous might
Did heale his wounds, and scorching heat alay,
Againe she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safetie gan deuoutly pray ;
And watch the noyous night, and wait for ioyous day.

51

The ioyous day gan early to appeare,
And faire *Aurora* from the deawy bed
Of aged *Tithone* gan her selfe to reare,
With rosie cheekes, for shame as blushing red ;
Her golden lockes for haste were loosely shed
About her eares, when *Vna* her did marke
Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,
From heauen high to chase the chearelesse darke ;
With merry note her loud salutes the mounting larke.

Noyous, Harmful.

52

Then freshly vp arose the doughtie knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battell readie dight ;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To haue deuourd, so soone as day he spyde,
When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismayd, and gan his fate to feare ;
Nathlesse with wonted rage he him aduaunced neare.

53

And in his first encounter, gaping wide,
He thought attonce him to haue swallowd quight,
And rusht vpon him with outragious pride ;
Who him r'encountring fierce, as hauke in flight,
Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright
Taking aduantage of his open iaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune might,
That deepe emperst his darksome hollow maw,
And back retyrd, his life bloud forth with all did draw.

54

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,
That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift ;
So downe he fell, that th' earth him vnderneath
Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift ;
So downe he fell, as an huge rockie clift,
Whose false foundation waues haue washt away,
With dreadfull poyse is from the mayneland rift,
And rolling downe, great *Neptune* doth dismay ;
So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

Poyse, Force.

55

The knight himselfe euen trembled at his fall,
So huge and horrible a masse it seem'd ;
And his deare Ladie, that beheld it all,
Durst not approch for dread, which she misdeem'd,
But yet at last, when as the direfull feend
She saw not stirre, off-shaking vaine affright,
She nigher drew, and saw that ioyous end :
Then God she praysd, and thankt her faithfull knight,
That had atchieu'd so great a conquest by his might.

Acrasia's Bower

(From *The Faerie Queene*, Book II., Canto xii.)

1

THERE the most daintie Paradise on ground,
It selfe doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,
And none does others happinesse enuye :
The painted flowres, the trees vpshooting hye,
The dales for shade, the hilles for breathing space,
The trembling groues, the Christall running by ;
And that, which all faire workes doth most aggrace,
The art which all that wrought, appeared in no place.

2

One would haue thought, (so cunningly, the rude,
And scorned parts were mingled with the fine,)
That nature had for wantonesse ensude
Art, and that Art at nature did repine ;

Ensude, Followed.

So striuing each th' other to vndermine,
Each did the others worke more beautifie ;
So diff'ring both in willes, agreed in fine :
So all agreed through sweete diuersitie,
This Gardin to adorne with all varietie.

3

And in the midst of all, a fountaine stood,
Of richest substaunce, that on earth might bee,
So pure and shiny, that the siluer flood
Through euery channell running one might see ;
Most goodly it with curious imageree
Was ouer-wrought, and shapes of naked boyes,
Of which some seemd with liuely iollitee,
To fly about, playing their wanton toyes,
Whilest others did them selues embay in liquid ioyes.

4

And ouer all, of purest gold was spred,
A trayle of yuie in his natiue hew :
For the rich mettall was so coloured,
That wight, who did not well auis'd it vew,
Would surely deeme it to be yuie trew :
Low his lasciuious armes adown did creepe,
That themselues dipping in the siluer dew,
Their fleecy flowres they tenderly did steepe,
Which drops of Christall seemd for wantones to weepe.

5

Infinit streames continually did well
Out of this fountaine, sweet and faire to see,
The which into an ample lauer fell,
And shortly grew to so great quantitie,

Embay, Bathed. *Lauer*, Basin.

That like a little lake it seemd to bee ;
Whose depth exceeded not three cubits hight,
That through the waues one might the bottom see,
All pau'd beneath with Iaspar shining bright,
That seemd the fountaine in that sea did sayle vpright.

6

And all the margent round about was set,
With shady Laurell trees, thence to defend
The sunny beames, which on the billowes bet,
And those which therein bathed, mote offend.
As *Guyon* hapned by the same to wend,
Two naked Damzelles he therein espyde,
Which therein bathing, seemed to contend,
And wrestle wantonly, ne car'd to hyde,
Their dainty parts from vew of any, which them eyde.

7

Sometimes the one would lift the other quight
Aboue the waters, and then downe againe
Her plong, as ouer maistered by might,
Where both awhile would couered remaine,
And each the other from to rise restraine ;
The whiles their snowy limbes, as through a vele,
So through the Christall waues appeared plaine :
Then suddeinly both would themselues vnhele,
And th' amarous sweet spoiles to greedy eyes reuele.

8

As that faire Starre, the messenger of morne,
His deawy face out of the sea doth reare :
Or as the *Cyprian* goddesse, newly borne
Of th' Oceans fruitfull froth, did first appeare :
Such seemed they, and so their yellow heare
Christalline humour dropped downe apace.
Whomsuch when *Guyon* saw, he drew him neare,

Margent, Margin.

And somewhat gan relent his earnest pace,
His stubborne brest gan secret pleasaunce to embrace.

9

The wanton Maidens him espying, stood
Gazing a while at his vnwonted guise ;
Then th' one her selfe low ducked in the flood,
Abasht, that her a straunger did a vise :
But th' other rather higher did arise,
And her two lilly brests aloft displayd,
And all, that might his melting hart entise
To her delights, she vnto him bewrayd :
The rest hid vnderneath, him more desirous made.

10

With that, the other likewise vp arose,
And her faire lockes, which formerly were bownd
Vp in one knot, she low adowne did lose :
Which flowing long and thick, her cloth'd arownd,
And th' yuorie in golden mantle gownd :
So that faire spectacle from him was reft,
Yet that, which reft it, no lesse faire was fownd :
So hid in lockes and waues from lookers theft,
Nought but her louely face she for his looking left.

11

Withall she laughed, and she blusht withall,
That blushing to her laughter gaue more grace,
And laughter to her blushing, as did fall :
Now when they spide the knight to slacke his pace,
Them to behold, and in his sparkling face
The secret signes of kindled lust appeare,
Their wanton meriments they did encreace,
And to him beckned, to approch more neare,
And shewd him many sights, that courage cold could reare.

12

On which when gazing him the Palmer saw,
He much rebukt those wandring eyes of his,
And counseld well, him forward thence did draw.
Now are they come nigh to the *Bowre of blis*
Of her fond fauorites so nam'd amis :
When thus the Palmer ; Now Sir, well auise ;
For here the end of all our trauell is :
Here wonnes *Acrasia*, whom we must surprise,
Else she will slip away, and all our drift despise.

13

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that mote delight a daintie eare,
Such as attonce might not on liuing ground,
Saue in this Paradise, be heard elswhere :
Right hard it was, for wight, which did it heare,
To read, what manner musicke that mote bee :
For all that pleasing is to liuing eare,
Was there consorted in one harmonee,
Birdes, voyces, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.

14

The ioyous birdes shrouded in chearefull shade,
Their notes vnto the voyce attempred sweet ;
Th' Angelicall soft trembling voyces made
To th' instruments diuine respondence meet :
The siluer sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmure of the waters fall :
The waters fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, vnto the wind did call :
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

Wonnes, Dwells.

15

There, whence that Musick seemed heard to bee,
Was the faire Witch her selfe now solacing,
With a new Louer, whom through sorceree
And witchcraft, she from farre did thither bring:
There she had him now layd a slombering,
In secret shade, after long wanton ioyes:
Whilst round about them pleasauntly did sing
Many faire Ladies, and lasciuious boyes,
That euer mixt their song with light licentious toyes.

16

And all that while, right ouer him she hong,
With her false eyes fast fixed in his sight,
As seeking medicine, whence she was stong,
Or greedily depasturing delight:
And oft inclining downe with kisses light,
For feare of waking him, his lips bedewd,
And through his humid eyes did sucke his spright,
Quite molten into lust and pleasure lewd;
Wherewith she sighed soft, as if his case she rewd.

17

The whiles some one did chaunt this louely lay;
Ah see, who so faire thing doest faine to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day;
Ah see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
Doth first peepe forth with bashfull modestee,
That fairer seemes, the lesse ye see her may;
Lo see soone after, how more bold and free
Her bared bosome she doth broad display;
Loe see soone after, how she fades, and falles away.

Spright, Spirit.

18

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre,
Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
That earst was sought to decke both bed and bowre,
Of many a Ladie, and many a Paramowre :
Gather therefore the Rose, whilest yet is prime,
For soone comes age, that will her pride deflowre :
Gather the Rose of loue, whilest yet is time,
Whilest louing thou mayst loued be with equall crime.

Artegall and the Giant

(From *The Faerie Queene*, Book V., Canto ii.)

1

NOUGHT is more honorable to a knight,
Ne better doth beseeme braue cheualry,
Then to defend the feeble in their right,
And wrong redresse in such as wend awry.
Whilome those great Heroes got thereby
Their greatest glory, for their rightfull deedes,
And place deserued with the Gods on hy.
Herein the noblesse of this knight exceedes,
Who now to perils great for iustice sake proceedes.

2

To which as he now was vppon the way,
He chaunst to meet a Dwarfe in hasty course ;
Whom he requir'd his forward hast to stay,
Till he of tidings mote with him discourse.
Loth was the Dwarfe, yet did he stay perforse,
And gan of sundry newes his store to tell,
As to his memory they had recourse :
But chiefely of the fairest *Florimell*,
How she was found againe, and spousde to *Marinell*.

3

For this was *Dony, Florimels* owne Dwarfe,
Whom hauing lost (as ye haue heard whyleare)
And finding in the way the scattred scarfe,
The fortune of her life long time did feare.
But of her health when *Artegall* did heare,
And safe returne, he was full inly glad,
And askt him where, and when her bridale cheare
Should be solemniz'd : for if time he had,
He would be there, and honor to her spousall ad.

4

Within three daies (quoth hee) as I do here,
It will be at the Castle of the strond ;
What time if naught me let, I will be there
To doe her seruice, so as I am bond.
But in my way a little here beyond
A cursed cruell Sarazin doth wonne,
That keepes a Bridges passage by strong hond,
And many errant Knights hath there fordonne ;
That makes all men for feare that passage for to shonne.

5

What mister wight (quoth he) and how far hence
Is he, that doth to trauellers such harmes ?
He is (said he) a man of great defence ;
Expert in battell and in deedes of armes ;
And more emboldned by the wicked charmes,
With which his daughter doth him still support ;
Hauing great Lordships got and goodly farmes,
Through strong oppression of his powre extort ;
By which he stil them holds, and keepes with strong effort.

Whyleare, Already. *Strond*, Shore.
Fordonne, Been overcome.

6

And dayly he his wrongs encreaseth more,
For neuer wight he lets to passe that way,
Ouer his Bridge, albee he rich or poore,
But he him makes his passage-penny pay :
Else he doth hold him backe or beat away.
Thereto he hath a groome of euill guize,
Whose scalp is bare, that bondage doth bewray,
Which pols and pils the poore in piteous wize ;
But he him selfe vppon the rich doth tyrannize.

7

His name is hight *Pollente*, rightly so
For that he is so puissant and strong,
That with his powre he all doth ouergo,
And makes them subiect to his mighty wrong ;
And some by sleight he eke doth vnderfong.
For on a Bridge he custometh to fight,
Which is but narrow, but exceeding long ;
And in the same are many trap fals pight,
Through which the rider downe doth fall through ouersight.

8

And vnderneath the same a riuer flowes,
That is both swift and dangerous deepe withall ;
Into the which whom so he ouerthrowes,
All destitute of helpe doth headlong fall.
But he him selfe, through practise vsuall,
Leapes forth into the floud, and there assaies
His foe confused through his sodaine fall,
That horse and man he equally dismaies,
And either both them drownes, or trayterously slaies.

Pols, Levies a tax upon. *Pils*, Plunders.
Vnderfong, Snare.

9

Then doth he take the spoile of them at will,
And to his daughter brings, that dwels thereby :
Who all that comes doth take, and therewith fill
The coffers of her wicked threasury ;
Which she with wrongs hath heaped vp so hy,
That many Princes she in wealth exceedes,
And purchast all the countrey lying ny
With the reuenue of her plenteous meedes,
Her name is *Munera*, agreeing with her deedes.

10

Thereto she is full faire, and rich attired,
With golden hands and siluer feete beside,
That many Lords haue her to wife desired :
But she them all despiseth for great pride.
Now by my life (sayd he) and God to guide,
None other way will I this day betake,
But by that Bridge, whereas he doth abide :
Therefore me thither lead. No more he spake,
But thitherward forthright his ready way did make.

11

Vnto the place he came within a while,
Where on the Bridge he ready armed saw
The Sarazin, awayting for some spoile.
Who as they to the passage gan to draw,
A villaine to them came with scull all raw,
That passage money did of them require,
According to the custome of their law.
To whom he aunswerd wroth, Loe there thy hire ;
And with that word him strooke, that streight he did expire.

12

Which when the Pagan saw, he wexed wroth,
And streight him selfe vnto the fight addrest,
Ne was Sir *Artegall* behinde : so both
Together ran with ready speares in rest.
Right in the midst, whereas they brest to brest
Should meete, a trap was letten downe to fall
Into the floud : streight leapt the Carle vnblest,
Well weening that his foe was falne withall :
But he was well aware, and leapt before his fall.

13

There being both together in the floud,
They each at other tyrannously flew ;
Ne ought the water cooled their whot bloud,
But rather in them kindled choler new.
But there the Paynim, who that vse well knew
To fight in water, great aduantage had,
That oftentimes him nigh he ouerthrew :
And eke the courser, whereuppon he rad,
Could swim like to a fish, whiles he his backe bestrad.

14

Which oddes when as Sir *Artegall* espide,
He saw no way, but close with him in hast ;
And to him driuing strongly downe the tide,
Vppon his iron coller griped fast,
That with the straint his wesand nigh he brast.
There they together stroue and struggled long,
Either the other from his steede to cast ;
Ne euer *Artegall* his griple strong
For any thing wold slacke, but still vppon him hong.

Carle, Churl. *Wesand*, Windpipe.

15

As when a Dolphin and a Sele are met,
In the wide champian of the Ocean plaine :
With cruell chaufe their courages they whet,
The maysterdome of each by force to gaine,
And dreadfull battaile twixt them do darraine :
They snuf, they snort, they bounce, they rage, they rore,
That all the sea disturbed with their traine,
Doth frie with fome aboue the surges hore.
Such was betwixt these two the troublesome vprore.

16

So *Artegall* at length him forst forsake
His horses backe, for dread of being drownd,
And to his handy swimming him betake.
Eftsoones him selfe he from his hold vnbownd,
And then no ods at all in him he fownd :
For *Artegall* in swimming skilfull was,
And durst the depth of any water sownd.
So ought each Knight, that vse of perill has,
In swimming be expert through waters force to pas.

17

Then very doubtfull was the warres euent,
Vncertaine whether had the better side :
For both were skild in that experiment,
And both in armes well traind and throughly tride.
But *Artegall* was better breath'd beside,
And towards th' end, grew greater in his might,
That his faint foe no longer could abide
His puissance, ne beare him selfe vpright,
But from the water to the land betooke his flight.

Chaufe, Rage. *Frie*, Boil.

18

But *Artegall* pursewd him still so neare,
With bright Chrysaor in his cruell hand,
That as his head he gan a litle reare
Aboue the brincke, to tread vpon the land,
He smote it off, that tumbling on the strand
It bit the earth for very fell despight,
And gnashed with his teeth, as if he band
High God, whose goodnesse he despaired quight,
Or curst the hand, which did that vengeance on him dight.

19

His corps was carried downe along the Lee,
Whose waters with his filthy bloud it stayned :
But his blasphemous head, that all might see,
He pitcht vpon a pole on high ordayned ;
Where many years it afterwards remayned,
To be a mirrour to all mighty men,
In whose right hands great power is contayned,
That none of them the feeble ouerren,
But alwaies doe their powre within iust compasse pen.

20

That done, vnto the Castle he did wend,
In which the Paynims daughter did abide,
Guarded of many which did her defend :
Of whom he entrance sought, but was denide,
And with reprochfull blasphemy defide,
Beaten with stones downe from the battilment,
That he was forced to withdraw aside ;
And bad his seruant *Talus* to inuent
Which way he enter might, without endangerment.

Band, Cursed. *Ouerren*, Oppress.

21

Eftsonnes his Page drew to the Castle gate,
And with his iron flale at it let flie,
That all the warders it did sore amate,
The which erewhile spake so reprochfully,
And made them stoupe, that looked earst so hie.
Yet still he bet, and bounst vppon the dore,
And thundred strokes thereon so hideouslie,
That all the peece he shaked from the flore,
And filled all the house with feare and great vprore.

22

With noise whereof the Lady forth appeared
Vppon the Castle wall, and when she saw
The daungerous state in which she stood, she feared
The sad effect of her neare ouerthrow;
And gan entreat that iron man below,
To cease his outrage, and him faire besought,
Sith neither force of stones which they did throw,
Nor powr of charms, which she against him wrought,
Might otherwise preuaile, or make him cease for ought.

23

But when as yet she saw him to proceede,
Vnmou'd with praiers, or with piteous thought,
She ment him to corrupt with goodly meede;
And causde great sackes with endlesse riches fraught,
Vnto the battilment to be vpbrought,
And powred forth ouer the Castle wall,
That she might win some time, though dearly bought
Whilest he to gathering of the gold did fall.
But he was nothing mou'd, nor tempted therewithall.

Amate, Dismay.

24

But still continu'd his assault the more,
And layd on load with his huge yron flaile,
That at the length he has yrent the dore,
And made way for his maister to assaile.
Who being entred, nought did then auaile
For wight, against his powre them selues to reare :
Each one did flie ; their hearts began to faile,
And hid them selues in corners here and there ;
And eke their dame halfe dead did hide her self for feare.

25

Long they her sought, yet no where could they finde her,
That sure they ween'd she was escapt away :
But *Talus*, that could like a limehound winde her,
And all things secrete wisely could bewray,
At length found out, whereas she hidden lay
Vnder an heape of gold. Thence he her drew
By the faire lockes, and fowly did array,
Withouten pitty of her goodly hew,
That *Artegall* him selfe her seemelesse plight did rew.

26

Yet for no pitty would he change the course
Of Iustice, which in *Talus* hand did lye ;
Who rudely hayld her forth without remorse,
Still holding vp her suppliant hands on hye,
And kneeling at his feete submissiuely.
But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold,
And eke her feete, those feete of siluer trye,
Which sought vnrighteousnesse, and iustice sold,
Chopt off, and nayld on high, that all might them behold.

Limehound, Bloodhound. *Trye*, Choice.

27

Her selfe then tooke he by the sclender wast,
In vaine loud crying, and into the flood
Ouer the Castle wall adowne her cast,
And there her drowned in the durty mud :
But the streame washt away her guilty blood.
Thereafter all that mucky pelfe he tooke,
The spoile of peoples euill gotten good,
The which her sire had scrap't by hooke and crooke,
And burning all to ashes, powr'd it downe the brooke.

28

And lastly all that Castle quite he raced,
Euen from the sole of his foundation,
And all the hewen stones thereof defaced,
That there mote be no hope of reparation,
Nor memory thereof to any nation.
All which when *Talus* throughly had perfourmed,
Sir *Artegall* vndid the euill fashion,
And wicked customes of that Bridge refourmed.
Which done, vnto his former iourney he retourned.

29

In which they measur'd mickle weary way,
Till that at length nigh to the sea they drew ;
By which as they did trauell on a day,
They saw before them, far as they could vew,
Full many people gathered in a crew ;
Whose great assembly they did much admire,
For neuer there the like resort they knew.
So towardes them they coasted, to enquire
What thing so many nations met, did there desire.

Raced, Razed.

30

There they beheld a mighty Gyant stand
Vpon a rocke, and holding forth on hie
An huge great paire of ballance in his hand,
With which he boasted in his surquedrie,
That all the world he would weigh equallie,
If ought he had the same to counterpoys.
For want whereof he weighed vanity,
And fild his ballaunce full of idle toys :
Yet was admired much of fooles, women, and boys.

31

He sayd that he would all the earth vptake,
And all the sea, deuided each from either :
So would he of the fire one ballaunce make,
And one of th' ayre, without or wind, or wether :
Then would he ballaunce heauen and hell together,
And all that did within them all containe ;
Of all whose weight, he would not misse a fether.
And looke what surplus did of each remaine,
He would to his owne part restore the same againe.

32

For why, he sayd they all vnequall were,
And had encroched vppon others share,
Like as the sea (which plaine he shewed there)
Had worne the earth, so did the fire the aire,
So all the rest did others parts empaire.
And so were realmes and nations run awry.
All which he vndertooke for to repaire,
In sort as they were formed aunciently ;
And all things would reduce vnto equality.

Surquedrie, Arrogance.

33

Therefore the vulgar did about him flocke,
And cluster thicke vnto his leasings vaine,
Like foolish flies about an hony crocke,
In hope by him great benefite to gaine,
And vncontrolled freedome to obtaine.
All which when *Artegall* did see, and heare,
How he mis-led the simple peoples traine,
In sdeignfull wize he drew vnto him neare,
And thus vnto him spake, without regard or feare.

34

Thou that presum'st to weigh the world anew,
And all things to an equall to restore,
In stead of right me seemes great wrong dost shew,
And far aboue thy forces pitch to sore
For ere thou limit what is lesse or more
In euery thing, thou oughtest first to know,
What was the poyse of euery part of yore :
And looke then how much it doth ouerflow,
Or faile thereof, so much is more then iust to trow.

35

For at the first they all created were
In goodly measure, by their Makers might,
And weighed out in ballaunces so nere,
That not a dram was missing of their right.
The earth was in the middle centre pight,
In which it doth immoueable abide,
Hemd in with waters like a wall in sight ;
And they with aire, that not a drop can slide :
Al which the heauens containe, and in their courses guide.

Leasings, Falsehoods.

36

Such heauenly iustice doth among them raine,
That euery one doe know their certaine bound,
In which they doe these many yeares remaine,
And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found.
But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound,
We are not sure they would so long remaine :
All change is perillous, and all chaunce vnsound.
Therefore leaue off to weigh them all againe,
Till we may be assur'd they shall their course retaine.

37

Thou foolishe Elfe (said then the Gyant wroth)
Seest not, how badly all things present bee,
And each estate quite out of order goth ?
The sea it selfe doest thou not plainely see
Encroch vppon the land there vnder thee ;
And th' earth it selfe how daily its increast,
By all that dying to it turned be ?
Were it not good that wrong were then surceast,
And from the most, that some were giuen to the least ?

38

Therefore I will throw downe these mountaines hie,
And make them leuell with the lowly plaine :
These towring rocks, which reach vnto the skie,
I will thrust downe into the deepest maine,
And as they were, them equalize againe.
Tyrants that make men subiect to their law,
I will suppresse, that they no more may raine ;
And Lordings curbe, that commons ouer-aw ;
And all the wealth of rich men to the poore will draw.

39

Of things vnseene how canst thou deeme aright,
Then answered the righteous *Artegall*,
Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight?
What though the sea with waues continuall
Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all:
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought,
For whatsoeuer from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide vnto an other brought:
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.

40

Likewise the earth is not augmented more,
By all that dying into it doe fade,
For of the earth they formed were of yore,
How euer gay their blossome or their blade
Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade.
What wrong then is it, if that when they die,
They turne to that, whereof they first were made?
All in the powre of their great Maker lie:
All creatures must obey the voice of the most hie.

41

They liue, they die, like as he doth ordaine,
Ne euer any asketh reason why.
The hils doe not the lowly dales disdaine;
The dales doe not the lofty hills enuy.
He maketh Kings to sit in souerainty;
He maketh subiects to their powre obay;
He pulleth downe, he setteth vp on hy;
He giues to this, from that he takes away.
For all we haue is his: what he list doe, he may.

42

What euer thing is done, by him is donne,
Ne any may his mighty will withstand ;
Ne any may his soueraine power shonne,
Ne loose that he hath bound with stedfast band.
In vaine therefore doest thou now take in hand,
To call to count, or weigh his workes anew,
Whose counsels depth thou canst not vnderstand,
Sith of things subiect to thy daily vew
Thou doest not know the causes, nor their courses dew.

43

For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the winde, that vnder heauen doth blow ;
Or weigh the light, that in the East doth rise ;
Or weigh the thought, that from mans mind doth flow.
But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall.
For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
That doest not know the least thing of them all ?
Ill can he rule the great, that cannot reach the small.

44

Therewith the Gyant much abashed sayd ;
That he of little things made reckoning light,
Yet the least word that euer could be layd
Within his ballaunce, he could way aright.
Which is (sayd he) more heauy then in weight,
The right or wrong, the false or else the trew ?
He answered, that he would try it streight,
So he the words into his ballaunce threw,
But streight the winged words out of his ballaunce flew.

45

Wroth wext he then, and sayd, that words were light,
Ne would within his ballaunce well abide.
But he could iustly weigh the wrong or right.
Well then, sayd *Artegall*, let it be tride.
First in one ballance set the true aside.
He did so first ; and then the false he layd
In th' other scale ; but still it downe did slide,
And by no meane could in the weight be stayd.
For by no meanes the false will with the truth be wayd.

46

Now take the right likewise, sayd *Artegale*,
And counterpeise the same with so much wrong.
So first the right he put into one scale ;
And then the Gyant stroue with puissance strong
To fill the other scale with so much wrong.
But all the wrongs that he therein could lay,
Might not it peise ; yet, did he labour long,
And swat, and chauf'd, and proued euery way :
Yet all the wrongs could not a little right downe way.

47

Which when he saw, he greatly grew in rage,
And almost would his balances haue broken :
But *Artegall* him fairely gan asswage,
And said ; Be not vpon thy balance wroken :
For they doe nought but right or wrong betoken ;
But in the mind the doome of right must bee ;
And so likewise of words, the which be spoken,
The eare must be the ballance, to decree
And iudge, whether with truth or falshood they agree.

Peise, Balance.

48

But set the truth and set the right aside,
For they with wrong or falshood will not fare;
And put two wrongs together to be tride,
Or else two falses, of each equall share;
And then together doe them both compare.
For truth is one, and right is euer one.
So did he, and then plaine it did appeare,
Whether of them the greater were attone.
But right sate in the middest of the beame alone.

49

But he the right from thence did thrust away,
For it was not the right, which he did seeke;
But rather stroue extremities to way,
Th' one to diminish, th' other for to eeke:
For of the meane he greatly did misleeke.
Whom when so lewdly minded *Talus* found,
Approching nigh vnto him cheeke by cheeke,
He shouldered him from off the higher ground,
And down the rock him throwing, in the sea him dround.

50

Like as a ship, whom cruell tempest driues
Vpon a rocke with horrible dismay,
Her shattered ribs in thousand peeces riues,
And spoyling all her geares and goodly ray,
Does make her selfe misfortunes piteous pray.
So downe the cliffe the wretched Gyant tumbled;
His battred ballances in peeces lay,
His timbered bones all broken rudely rumbled,
So was the high aspyring with huge ruine humbled.

51

That when the people, which had there about
Long wayted, saw his sudden desolation,
They gan to gather in tumultuous rout,
And mutining, to stirre vp ciuill faction,
For certaine losse of so great expectation.
For well they hoped to haue got great good,
And wondrous riches by his innouation.
Therefore resoluing to reuenge his blood,
They rose in armes, and all in battell order stood.

52

Which lawlesse multitude him comming too
In warlike wise, when *Artegall* did vew,
He much was troubled, ne wist what to doo.
For loth he was his noble hands t' embrew
In the base blood of such a rascall crew ;
And otherwise, if that he should retire,
He fear'd least they with shame would him pursew,
Therefore he *Talus* to them sent, t' inquire
The cause of their array, and truce for to desire.

53

But soone as they him nigh approching spide,
They gan with all their weapons him assay,
And rudely stroke at him on euery side :
Yet nought they could him hurt, ne ought dismay.
But when at them he with his flaile gan lay,
He like a swarme of flyes them ouerthrew ;
Ne any of them durst come in his way,
But here and there before his presence flew,
And hid themselues in holes and bushes from his vew.

54

As when a Faulcon hath with nimble flight
Flowne at a flush of Ducks, foreby the brooke,
The trembling foule dismayd with dreadfull sight
Of death, the which them almost ouertooke,
Doe hide themselues from her astonying looke,
Amongst the flags and couert round about.
When *Talus* saw they all the field forsooke
And none appear'd of all that raskall rout,
To *Artegall* he turn'd, and went with him throughout.

TALE OF OPPRESSION

Muiopotmos

I SING of deadly dolorous debate,
Stir'd vp through wrathfull *Nemesis* despight,
Betwixt two mightie ones of great estate,
Drawne into armes, and proofe of mortall fight,
Through prowd ambition, and hartswelling hate,
Whilest neither could the others greater might
And sdeignfull scorne endure ; that from small iarre
Their wraths at length broke into open warre.

The roote whereof and tragicall effect,
Vouchsafe, O thou the mournfulst Muse of nyne,
That wontst the tragick stage for to direct,
In funerall complaints and waylfull tyne,
Reueale to me, and all the meanes detect,
Through which sad *Clarion* did at last declyne
To lowest wretchednes ; And is there then
Such rancour in the harts of mightie men ?

Astonying, Confounding. *Iarre* Discord

Of all the race of siluer-winged Flies
Which doo possesse the Empire of the aire,
Betwixt the centred earth, and azure skies,
Was none more fauourable, nor more faire,
Whilst heauen did fauour his felicities,
Then *Clarion*, the eldest sonne and haire
Of *Muscaroll*, and in his fathers sight
Of all aliue did seeme the fairest wight.

With fruitfull hope his aged breast he fed
Of future good, which his yong toward yeares,
Full of braue courage and bold hardyhed,
Aboue th' ensample of his equall peares,
Did largely promise, and to him forered
(Whilst oft his heart did melt in tender teares)
That he in time would sure proue such an one,
As should be worthie of his fathers throne.

The fresh yong flie, in whom the kindly fire
Of lustful youngth began to kindle fast,
Did much disdaine to subiect his desire
To loathsome sloth, or houres in ease to wast,
But ioy'd to range abroad in fresh attire ;
Through the wide compas of the ayrie coast,
And with vnwearied wings each part t' inquire
Of the wide rule of his renowmed sire.

For he so swift and nimble was of flight,
That from this lower tract he dar'd to stie
Vp to the clowdes, and thence with pineons light,
To mount aloft vnto the Christall skie,
To vew the workmanship of heauens hight :
Whence downe descending he along would flie
Vpon the streaming riuers, sport to finde ;
And ofte would dare to tempt the troublous winde.

Hardyhed, Audacity. *Forered*, Betokened.
Ayrie, Airy.

So on a Summers day, when season milde
With gentle calme the world had quieted,
And high in heauen *Hyperions* fierie childe
Ascending, did his beames abroad dispred,
Whiles all the heauens on lower creatures smilde ;
Yong *Clarion* with vauntfull lustie head,
After his guize did cast abroad to fare ;
And theretoo gan his furnitures prepare.

His breastplate first, that was of substance pure,
Before his noble heart he firmely bound,
That mought his life from yron death assure,
And ward his gentle corpes from cruell wound :
For it by arte was framed, to endure
The bit of balefull steele and bitter stownd,
No lesse than that, which *Vulcane* made to sheild
Achilles life from fate of *Troyan* field.

And then about his shoulders broad he threw
An hairie hide of some wilde beast, whom hee
In saluage forrest by aduenture slew,
And reft the spoyle his ornament to bee :
Which spredding all his backe with dreadfull vew,
Made all that him so horrible did see,
Thinke him *Alcides* with the Lyons skin,
When the *Nœmean* Conquest he did win.

Vpon his head his glistering Burganet,
The which was wrought by wondrous deuice,
And curiously engrauen, he did set ;
The mettall was of rare and passing price ;
Not *Bilbo* steele, nor brasse from *Corinth* fet,
Nor costly *Oricalche* from strange *Phœnice* ;
But such as could both *Phœbus* arrowes ward,
And th' hayling darts of heauen beating hard.

Dispred, Spread out. *Furnitures*, Equipment.
Stownd, Blow. *Saluage*, Wild.
Burganet, Steel cap.

Therein two deadly weapons fixt he bore,
Strongly outlaunced towards either side,
Like two sharpe speares, his enemies to gore :
Like as a warlike Brigandine, applyde
To fight, layes forth her threatfull pikes afore,
The engines which in them sad death doo hyde :
So did this flie outstretch his fearefull hornes
Yet so as him their terrour more adornes.

Lastly his shinie wings as siluer bright,
Painted with thousand colours, passing farre
All Painters skill, he did about him dight :
Not halfe so manie sundrie colours arre
In *Iris* bowe, ne heauen doth shine so bright,
Distinguished with manie a twinckling starre,
Nor *Iunoes* Bird in her ey-spotted traine
So manie goodly colours doth containe.

Ne (may it be withouten perill spoken)
The Archer God, the sonne of *Cytheree*,
That ioyes on wretched louers to be wroken,
And heaped spoyles of bleeding harts to see,
Beares in his wings so manie a changefull token.
Ah my liege Lord, forgiue it vnto mee,
If ought against thine honour I haue tolde ;
Yet sure those wings were fairer manifolde.

Full manie a Ladie faire, in Court full oft
Beholding them, him secretly enuide,
And wisht that two such fannes, so silken soft,
And golden faire, her Loue would her prouide ;
Or that when them the gorgeous Flie had doft,
Some one that would with grace be gratifide,
From him would steale them priuily away,
And bring to her so precious a pray.

Wroken, Avenged.

Report is that dame *Venus* on a day,
In spring when flowres doo clothe the fruitful ground,
Walking abroad with all her Nymphes to play,
Bad her faire damzels flocking her arownd,
To gather flowres, her forhead to array :
Emongst the rest a gentle Nymph was found,
Hight *Astery*, excelling all the crewe
In curteous vsage, and vnstained hewe.

Who being nimbler ioynted than the rest,
And more industrious, gathered more store
Of the fields honour, than the others best ;
Which they in secret harts enuying sore,
Tolde *Venus*, when her as the worthiest
She prais'd, that *Cupide* (as they heard before)
Did lend her secret aide, in gathering
Into her lap the children of the spring.

Whereof the Goddesse gathering iealous feare,
Not yet vnmindfull, how not long agoe
Her sonne to *Psyche* secrete loue did beare,
And long it close conceal'd, till mickle woe
Thereof arose, and manie a rufull teare ;
Reason with sudden rage did ouergoe,
And giuing hastie credit to th' accuser,
Was led away of them that did abuse her.

Eftsoones that Damzel by her heauenly might,
She turn'd into a winged Butterflie,
In the wide aire to make her wandring flight ;
And all those flowres, with which so plenteouslie
Her lap she filled had, that bred her spight,
She placed in her wings, for memorie
Of her pretended crime, though crime none were :
Since which that flie them in her wings doth beare.

Thus the fresh *Clarion* being readie dight,
Vnto his iourney did himselfe addresse,

And with good speed began to take his flight :
Ouer the fields in his franke lustinesse,
And all the champion he soared light,
And all the countrey wide he did possesse,
Feeding vpon their pleasures bounteouslie,
That none gainsaid, nor none did him enuie.

The woods, the riuers, and the medowes green,
With his aire-cutting wings he measured wide,
Ne did he leaue the mountaines bare vnseene,
Nor the ranke grassie fennes delights vntride.
But none of these, how euer sweete they beene,
Mote please his fancie, nor him cause t' abide :
His choicefull sense with euerie change doth flit.
No common things may please a wauering wit.

To the gay gardins his vnstaid desire
Him wholly caried, to refresh his sprights :
There lauish Nature in her best attire,
Powres forth sweete odors, and alluring sights :
And Arte with her contending, doth aspire
T' excell the naturall, with made delights :
And all that faire or pleasant may be found,
In riotous excesse doth there abound.

There he arriuing, round about doth flie,
From bed to bed, from one to other border,
And takes suruey with curious busie eye,
Of euerie flowre and herbe there set in order :
Now this, now that he tasteth tenderly,
Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,
Ne with his feete their silken leaues deface :
But pastures on the pleasures of each place.

And euermore with most varietie,
And change of sweetnesse (for all change is sweete)

Champion, Open country. *Sprights*, Spirits.

He casts his glutton sense to satisfie,
Now sucking of the sap of herbe most meete,
Or of the deaw, which yet on them does lie,
Now in the same bathing his tender feete:
And then he pearcheth on some braunch thereby,
To weather him, and his moyst wings to dry.

And then againe he turneth to his play,
To spoyle the pleasures of that Paradise:
The wholsome Saulge, and Lauender still gray,
Ranke smelling Rue, and Cummin good for eyes,
The Roses raigning in the pride of May,
Sharpe Isope, good for greene wounds remedies,
Faire Marigoldes, and Bees alluring Thime,
Sweete Marioram, and Daysies decking prime.

Coole Violets, and Orpine growing still,
Embathed Balme, and chearfull Galingale,
Fresh Costmarie, and breathfull Camomill,
Dull Poppie, and drink-quickning Setuale,
Veyne-healing Veruen, and hed-purging Dill,
Sound Sauorie, and Bazill hartie-hale,
Fat Colworts, and comforting Perseline,
Colde Lettuce, and refreshing Rosmarine.

And whatso else of vertue good or ill
Grewe in this Gardin, fetcht from farre away,
Of euerie one he takes, and tastes at will,
And on their pleasures greedily doth pray.
Then when he hath both plaid, and fed his fill,
In the warme Sunne he doth himselfe embay,
And there him rests in riotous suffisaunce
Of all his gladfulnes, and kingly ioyaunce.

Saulge, Sage. *Isope*, Hyssop.
Orpine, A succulent herbaceous plant.
Galingale, Species of sedge.
Costmarie, Plant allied to the pansy.
Setuale. Zedoary. *Veruen*, Vervain.
Perseline, Parsley.

What more felicitie can fall to creature,
Than to enioy delight with libertie,
And to be Lord of all the workes of Nature,
To raine in th' aire from earth to highest skie,
To feed on flowres, and weeds of glorious feature,
To take what euer thing doth please the eie ?
Who rests not pleased with such happines,
Well worthie he to taste of wretchednes.

But what on earth can long abide in state ?
Or who can him assure of happie day ;
Sith morning faire may bring fowle euening late,
And least mishap the most blisse alter may ?
For thousand perills lie in close awaite
About vs daylie, to worke our decay ;
That none, except a God, or God him guide,
May them auoyde, or remedie prouide.

And whatso heauens in their secret doome
Ordained haue, how can fraile fleshly wight
Forecast, but it must needs to issue come ?
The sea, the aire, the fire, the day, the night,
And th' armies of their creatures all and some
Do serue to them, and with importune might
Warre against vs the vassals of their will.
Who then can saue, what they dispose to spill ?

Not thou, O *Clarion*, though fairest thou
Of all thy kinde, vnhappie happie Flie,
Whose cruell fate is wouen euen now
Of *Ioues* owne hand, to worke thy miserie :
Ne may thee helpe the manie hartie vow,
Which thy olde Sire with sacred pietie
Hath powred forth for thee, and th' altars sprent :
Nought may thee saue from heauens auengement.

Sith, Since. *Wight*, Creature.

It fortuned (as heauens had behight)
That in this gardin, where yong *Clarion*
Was wont to solace him, a wicked wight
The foe of faire things, th' author of confusion,
The shame of Nature, the bondslaue of spight,
Had lately built his hatefull mansion,
And lurking closely, in awayte now lay,
How he might anie in his trap betray.

But when he spide the ioyous Butterflie
In this faire plot dispacing too and fro,
Fearles of foes and hidden ieopardie,
Lord how he gan for to bestirre him tho,
And to his wicked worke each part applie :
His heart did earne against his hated foe,
And bowels so with ranckling poyson swelde,
That scarce the skin the strong contagion helde.

The cause why he this Flie so maliced,
Was (as in stories it is written found)
For that his mother which him bore and bred,
The most fine-fingred workwoman on ground,
Arachne, by his meanes was vanquished
Of *Pallas*, and in her owne skill confound,
When she with her for excellence contended,
That wrought her shame, and sorrow neuer ended.

For the *Tritonian* Goddesse hauing hard
Her blazed fame, which all the world had fil'd,
Came downe to proue the truth, and due reward
For her prais-worthie workmanship to yeild
But the presumptuous Damzel rashly dar'd
The Goddesse selfe to chalenge to the field,
And to compare with her in curious skill
Of workes with loome, with needle, and with quill.

Minerua did the chalenge not refuse,
But deign'd with her the paragon to make :

So to their worke they sit, and each doth chuse
What storie she will for her tapet take.
Arachne figur'd how *Ioue* did abuse
Europa like a Bull, and on his backe
Her through the sea did beare ; so liuely seene,
That it true Sea, and true Bull ye would weene.

She seem'd still backe vnto the land to looke,
And her play-fellowes aide to call, and feare
The dashing of the waues, that vp she tooke
Her daintie feete, and garments gathered neare :
But (Lord) how she in eurie member shooke,
When as the land she saw no more appeare,
But a wilde wildernes of waters deepe :
Then gan she greatly to lament and weepe.

Before the Bull she pictur'd winged Loue,
With his yong brother Sport, light fluttering
Vpon the waues, as each had been a Doue ;
The one his bowe and shafts, the other Spring
A burning Teade about his head did moue,
As in their Syres new loue both triumphing :
And manie Nymphes about them flocking round,
And manie *Tritons*, which their hornes did sound.

And round about, her worke she did empale
With a faire border wrought of sundrie flowres,
Enwouen with an Yuie winding trayle :
A goodly worke, full fit for Kingly bowres,
Such as Dame *Pallas*, such as Enuie pale,
That al good things with venemous tooth deuowres,
Could not accuse. Then gan the Goddesse bright
Her selfe likewise vnto her worke to dight.

She made the storie of the olde debate,
Which she with *Neptune* did for *Athens* trie :

Tapet, Tapestry.
Yuie, Ivy.
Teade, Torch.
Dight, Repair.

Twelue Gods doo sit around in royall state,
And *Ioue* in midst with awfull Maiestie,
To iudge the strife betweene them stirred late :
Each of the Gods by his like visnomie
Eathe to be knowen ; but *Ioue* aboue them all,
By his great lookes and power Imperiall.

Before them stands the God of Seas in place,
Clayming that sea-coast Citie as his right,
And strikes the rockes with his three-forked mace ;
Whenceforth issues a warlike steed in sight,
The signe by which he chalengeth the place,
That all the Gods, which saw his wondrous might
Did surely deeme the victorie his due :
But seldome seene, foreiudgement proueth true.

Then to her self she giues her *Aegide* shield,
And steelhed speare, and morion on her hedd,
Such as she oft is seene in warlicke field :
Then sets she forth, how with her weapon dredd
She smote the ground, the which streight foorth did yield
A fruitfull Olyue tree, with berries spredd,
That all the Gods admir'd ; then all the storie
She compast with a wreathe of Olyues hoarie.

Emongst those leaues she made a Butterflie,
With excellent deuice and wondrous slight,
Fluttring among the Oliues wantonly,
That seem'd to liue, so like it was in sight :
The veluet nap which on his wings doth lie,
The silken downe with which his backe is dight,
His broad outstretched hornes, his hayrie thies,
His glorious colours, and his glistering eies.

Which when *Arachne* saw, as ouerlaid,
And mastered with workmanship so rare,

Visnomie, Visage. *Eathe*, Easy.

She stood astonied long, ne ought gainesaid,
And with fast fixed eyes on her did stare,
And by her silence, signe of one dismaid,
The victorie did yeeld her as her share :
Yet did she inly fret, and felly burne,
And all her blood to poysonous rancor turne.

That shortly from the shape of womanhed
Such as she was, when *Pallas* she attempted,
She grew to hideous shape of dryrihed,
Pined with griefe of follie late repented :
Eftsoones her white streight legs were altered
To crooked crawling shankes, of marrowe empted,
And her faire face to fowle and loathsome hewe,
And her fine corpes to a bag of venim grewe.

This cursed creature, mindfull of that olde
Enfestred grudge, the which his mother felt,
So soone as *Clarion* he did beholde,
His heart with vengefull malice inly swelt,
And weauing straight a net with manie a folde
About the caue, in which he lurking dwelt,
With fine small cords about it stretched wide,
So finely sponne, that scarce they could be spide.

Not anie damzell, which her vaunteth most
In skilfull knitting of soft silken twyne ;
Nor anie weauer, which his worke doth boast
In dieper, in damaske, or in lyne ;
Nor anie skil'd in workmanship embost ;
Nor anie skil'd in loupes of fingring fine,
Might in their diuers cunning euer dare,
With this so curious networke to compare.

Ne doo I thinke, that that same subtil gin,
The which the *Lemnian* God framde craftilie,

Felly, Fiercely.
Dryrihed, Gloom.
Attempted, Tempted.
Embost, Adorned.

Mars sleeping with his wife to compasse in,
That all the Gods with common mockerie
Might laugh at them, and scorne their shamefull sin,
Was like to this. This same he did applie,
For to entrap the careles *Clarion*,
That rang'd each where without suspition.

Suspition of friend, nor feare of foe,
That hazarded his health, had he at all,
But walkt at will, and wandred too and fro,
In the pride of his freedome principall :
Litle wist he his fatall future woe,
But was secure, the liker he to fall.
He likest is to fall into mischaunce,
That is regardles of his gouernaunce.

Yet still *Aragnoll* (so his foe was hight)
Lay lurking couertly him to surprise,
And all his gins that him entangle might,
Drest in good order as he could deuise.
At length the foolish Flie without foresight,
As he that did all daunger quite despise,
Toward those parts came flying careleslie,
Where hidden was his hatefull enemie.

Who seeing him, with secrete ioy therefore
Did tickle inwardly in euerie vaine,
And his false hart fraught with all treasons store,
Was fil'd with hope, his purpose to obtaine :
Himselfe he close vpgathered more and more
Into his den, that his deceiptfull traine
By his there being might not be bewraid,
Ne anie noyse, ne anie motion made.

Like as a wily Fox, that hauing spide,
Where on a sunnie banke the Lambes doo play,

Each, Every. *Traine*, Snare.

Full closely creeping by the hinder side,
Lyes in ambushment of his hoped pray,
Ne stirreth limbe, till seeing readie tide,
He rusheth forth, and snatcheth quite away
One of the litle yonglings vnawares :
So to his worke *Aragnoll* him prepares.

Who now shall giue vnto my heauie eyes
A well of teares, that all may ouerflow ?
Or where shall I finde lamentable cryes,
And mournfull tunes enough my griefe to show ?
Helpe O thou Tragick Muse, me to deuise
Notes sad enough, t' expresse this bitter throw :
For loe, the drerie stownd is now arriued,
That of all happines hath vs depriued.

The luckles *Clarion*, whether cruell Fate,
Or wicked Fortune faultles him misled,
Or some vngracious blast out of the gate
Of *Aeoles* raine perforce him droue on hed,
Was (O sad hap and howre vnfortunate)
With violent swift flight forth caried
Into the cursed cobweb, which his foe
Had framed for his finall ouerthroe.

There the fond Flie entangled, strugled long,
Himselfe to free thereout ; but all in vaine.
For striuing more, the more in laces strong
Himselfe he tide, and wrapt his winges twaine
In lymie snares the subtill loupes among ;
That in the ende he breathelesse did remaine,
And all his yougthly forces idly spent,
Him to the mercie of th' auenger lent.

Which when the greisly tyrant did espie,
Like a grimme Lyon rushing with fierce might

Tide, Time. *Stownd*, Sorrow.

Out of his den, he seized greedelie
On the resistles pray, and with fell spight,
Vnder the left wing stroke his weapon slie
Into his heart, that his deepe groning spright
In bloodie streames foorth fled into the aire,
His bodie left the spectacle of care.

FABLES

The Oak and the Bramble

(From February of *The Shepherd's Calendar*.)

THERE grewe an aged Tree on the greene,
A goodly Oake sometime had it bene,
With armes full strong and largely displayd,
But of their leaues they were disarayde :
The bodie bigge, and mightely pight,
Throughly rooted, and of wonderous hight :
Whilome had bene the King of the field,
And mochell mast to the husband did yielde,
And with his nuts larded many swine.
But now the gray moss marred his rine,
His bared boughes were beaten with stormes,
His toppe was bald, and wasted with wormes,
His honor decayed, his braunches sere.
Hard by his side grewe a bragging brere,
Which proudly thrust into Thelement,
And seemed to threat the Firmament.
Yt was embellisht with blossomes fayre,
And thereto aye wonned to repayre
The shepheards daughters, to gather flowres,
To peinct their girlonds with his colowres.

Throughly, Thoroughly.
Larded, Fattened.
Brere, Briar.
Mochell, Much.
Rine, Bark.
Thelement, The element.

And in his small bushes vsed to shrowde
The sweete Nightingale singing so lowde:
Which made this foolish Brere wexe so bold,
That on a time he cast him to scold,
And snebbe the good Oake, for he was old.
Why standst there (quoth he) thou brutish blocke?
Nor for fruict, nor for shadowe serues thy stocke:
Seest, how fresh my flowers bene spredde,
Dyed in Lilly white, and Cremsin redde,
With Leaues engrained in lusty greene,
Colours meete to clothe a mayden Queene.
Thy wast bignes but combers the grownd,
And dirks the beauty of my blossomes rownd.
The mouldie mosse, which thee accloieth,
My Sinamon smell too much annoieth.
Wherefore soone I rede thee, hence remoue,
Least thou the price of my displeasure proue.
So spake this bold brere with great disdaine:
Little him answered the Oake againe,
But yielded, with shame, and greefe adawed,
That of a weede he was ouercrawed.
Yt chaunced after vpon a day,
The Hus-bandman selfe to come that way,
Of custome for to seruewe his grownd,
And his trees of state in compasse rownd.
Him when the spitefull brere had espyed,
Causlesse complained, and lowdly cryed
Vnto his Lord, stirring vp sterne strife:
O my liege Lord, the God of my life,
Pleaseth you ponder your Suppliants plaint,
Caused of wrong, and cruell constraint,
Which I your poore Vassall dayly endure:
And but your goodnes the same recure,
Am like for desperate doole to dye,

Shrowde, Shelter.
Dirks, Darkens.
Adawed, Subdued.
Snebbe, Chide.
Accloieth, Chokes.
Seruewe, Survey.
Recure, To remedy.

Through felonous force of mine enemie.
Greatly aghast with this piteous plea,
Him rested the goodman on the lea,
And badde the Brere in his plaint proceede.
With painted words tho gan this proude weede,
(As most vsen Ambitious folke :)
His colowred crime with craft to cloke.
Ah my soueraigne, Lord of creatures all,
Thou placer of plants both humble and tall,
Was not I planted of thine owne hand,
To be the primrose of all thy land,
With flowring blossomes, to furnish the prime,
And scarlot berries in Sommer time ?
How falls it then, that this faded Oake,
Whose bodie is sere, whose braunches broke,
Whose naked Armes stretch vnto the fyre,
Vnto such tyrannie doth aspire :
Hindering with his shade my louely light,
And robbing me of the swete sonnes sight ?
So beate his old boughes my tender side,
That oft the bloud springeth from woundes wyde :
Vntimely my flowres forced to fall,
That bene the honor of your Coronall.
And oft he lets his cancker wormes light
Vpon my braunches, to worke me more spight ;
And oft his hoarie locks downe doth cast,
Where with my fresh flowretts bene defast.
For this, and many more such outrage,
Craving your goodlihead to aswage
The ranckorous rigour of his might,
Nought aske I, but onely to hold my right :
Submitting me to your good sufferance,
And praying to be garded from greeuance.
To this the Oake cast him to replie
Well as he couth : but his enemie
Had kindled such coles of displeasure,

Primrose, Finest.

That the good man noulde stay his leasure,
But home him hasted with furious heate,
Encreasing his wrath with many a threate.
His harmefull Hatchet he hent in hand,
(Alas, that it so ready should stand)
And to the field alone he speedeth,
(Ay little helpe to harme there needeth)
Anger nould let him speke to the tree,
Enaunter his rage mought cooled bee :
But to the roote bent his sturdy stroke,
And made many wounds in the wast Oake.
The Axes edge did oft turne againe,
As halfe vnwilling to cutte the graine :
Semed, the sencelesse yron dyd feare,
Or to wrong holy eld did forbeare.
For it had bene an auncient tree,
Sacred with many a mysteree,
And often crost with the priestes crewe,
And often halowed with holy water dewe.
But sike fancies weren foolerie,
And broughten this Oake to this miserye.
For nought mought they quitten him from decay :
For fiercely the good man at him did laye.
The blocke oft groned vnder the blow,
And sighed to see his neare ouerthrow.
In fine the steele had pierced his pitth,
Tho downe to the earth he fell forthwith :
His wonderous weight made the grounde to quake,
Thearth shronke vnder him, and seemed to shake.
There lyeth the Oake, pitied of none.

Now stands the Brere like a Lord alone,
Puffed vp with pryde and vaine pleasaunce :
But all this glee had no continuaunce.
For eftsones Winter gan to approche,
The blustring Boreas did encroche,

Hent, Took. *Nould*, Would not.
Enaunter, In case. *Eld*, Age.
Crewe, Pot.

And beate vpon the solitarie Brere :
For nowe no succoure was seene him nere.
Now gan he repent his pryde to late :
For naked left and disconsolate,
The byting frost nipt his stalke dead,
The watrie wette weighed downe his head,
And heaped snowe burdned him so sore,
That nowe vpright he can stand no more :
And being downe, is trodde in the durt
Of cattell, and brouzed, and sorely hurt.
Such was thend of this Ambitious brere,
For scorning Eld.

The Fox and the Kid

(From May of *The Shepherd's Calendar*.)

THILKE same Kidde (as I can well deuise)
Was too very foolish and vnwise.
For on a tyme in Sommer season,
The Gate her dame, that had good reason,
Yode forth abroade vnto the greene wood,
To brouze, or play, or what shee thought good.
But for she had a motherly care
Of her young sonne, and wit to beware,
Shee set her youngling before her knee,
That was both fresh and louely to see,
And full of fauour, as kidde mought be :
His Vellet head began to shoote out,
And his wrethed hornes gan newly sprout :
The blossomes of lust to bud did beginne,
And spring forth ranckly vnder his chinne.
My sonne (quoth she) (and with that gan weepe :
For carefull thoughts in her heart did creepe)

Brouzed, Eaten. *Thend*, The end.
Gate, Goat. *Yode*, Went.
Vellet, Velvet.

God blesse thee poore Orphane, as he mought me,
And send thee ioy of thy iollitee.
Thy father (that word she spake with payne :
For a sigh had nigh rent her heart in twaine)
Thy father, had he liued this day,
To see the braunche of his body displaie,
How would he haue ioyed at this sweete sight ?
But ah false Fortune such ioy did him spight,
And cutte of hys dayes with vntimely woe,
Betraying him into the traines of hys foe.
Now I a waylfull widdowe behight,
Of my old age haue this one delight,
To see thee succeede in thy fathers steade,
And florish in flowres of lusty head.
For euen so thy father his head vpheld,
And so his hauty hornes did he weld.
Tho marking him with melting eyes,
A thrilling throbbe from her hart did aryse,
And interrupted all her other speache,
With some old sorowe, that made a newe breache :
Seemed shee sawe in the younglings face
The old lineaments of his fathers grace.
At last her solein silence she broke,
And gan his newe budded beard to stroke.
Kiddie (quoth shee) thou kenst the great care,
I haue of thy health and thy welfare,
Which many wyld beastes liggen in waite,
For to entrap in thy tender state :
But most the Foxe, maister of collusion :
For he has voued thy last confusion.
For thy my Kiddie be ruld by mee,
And neuer giue trust to his trecheree.
And if he chaunce come, when I am abroade,
Sperre the yate fast for feare of fraude :
Ne for all his worst, nor for his best,
Open the dore at his request.

Cutte of, Cut off.
Liggen, Lie.
Traines, Snares.
Sperre the yate, Bolt the gate.

So schooled the Gate her wanton sonne,
That answerd his mother, all should be done.
Tho went the pensife Damme out of dore,
And chaunst to stomble at the threshold flore :
Her stombling steppe some what her amazed,
(For such, as signes of ill luck bene dispraised)
Yet forth shee yode thereat halfe aghast :
And Kiddie the dore sperred after her fast.
It was not long, after shee was gone,
But the false Foxe came to the dore anone :
Not as a Foxe, for then he had be kend,
But all as a poore pedler he did wend,
Bearing a trusse of tryfles at hys backe,
As bells, and babes, and glasses in hys packe.
A Biggen he had got about his braine,
For in his headpeace he felt a sore payne.
His hinder heele was wrapt in a clout,
For with great cold he had gotte the gout.
There at the dore he cast me downe hys pack,
And layd him downe, and groned, Alack, Alack.
Ah deare Lord, and sweete Saint Charitee,
That some good body woulde once pitie mee.
Well heard Kiddie al this sore constraint,
And lengd to know the cause of his complaint :
Tho creeping close behind the Wickets clinck,
Preuilie he peeped out through a chinck :
Yet not so preuilie, but the Foxe him spyed :
For deceifull meaning is double eyed.
Ah good young maister (then gan he crye)
Iesus blesse that sweete face, I espye,
And keepe your corpse from the carefull stounds,
That in my carrion carcas abounds.
The Kidd pittying hys heauinesse,
Asked the cause of his great distresse,
And also who, and whence that he were.

Kend, Known. *Babes*, Dolls.
Biggen, Child's cap. *Clout*, Cloth.
Preuilie, Secretly.

Tho he, that had well ycond his lere,
Thus medled his talke with many a teare,
Sicke, sicke, alas, and little lack of dead,
But I be relieued by your beastlyhead.
I am a poore Sheepe, albe my coloure donne ;
For with long traueile I am brent in the sonne.
And if that my Grandsire me sayd, be true,
Sicker I am very sybbe to you :
So be your goodlihead doe not disdayne
The base kinred of so simple swaine.
Of mercye and fauour then I you pray,
With your ayd to forstall my neere decay.
Tho out of his packe a glasse he tooke :
Wherein while kiddie vnwares did looke,
He was so enamored with the newell,
That nought he deemed deare for the iewell.
Tho opened he the dore, and in came
The false Foxe, as he were starke lame.
His tayle he clapt betwixt his legs twayne,
Lest he should be descried by his trayne.
Being within, the Kidde made him good glee,
All for the loue of the glasse he did see.
After his chere the Pedler can chat,
And tell many lesings of this, and that :
And how he could shewe many a fine knack.
Tho shewed his ware, and opened his packe,
All saue a bell, which he left behind
In the bas-ket for the Kidde to fynd.
Which when the Kidde stooped downe to catch,
He popt him in, and his basket did latch,
Ne stayed he once, the dore to make fast,
But ranne awaye with him in all hast.
Home when the doubtfull Damme had her hyde,

Ycond his lere, Learned his lesson.
Beastlyhead, Personality as a beast.
Donne, Dark.
Very sybbe, Closely related.
Newell, Novelty.
Sicker, Assuredly.
Tho, Thereupon.
Lesings, Lies.

She mought see the dore stand open wyde.
All agast, lowdly she gan to cal
Her Kidde : but he nould answere at all.
Tho on the flore she sawe the merchandise,
Of which her sonne had sette to dere a prise.
What helpe ? her Kidde shee knewe well was gone :
Shee weeped, and wayled, and made great mone.
Such end had the Kidde, for he nould warned be
Of craft, coloured with simplicitie :
And such end perdie does all hem remayne,
That of such falsers freendship bene fayne.

Mother Hubberd's Tale

It was the month, in which the righteous Maide,
That for disdaine of sinfull worlds vpbraide,
Fled back to heauen, whence she was first conceiued,
Into her siluer bowre the Sunne receiued ;
And the hot *Syrian* Dog on him awayting,
After the chased Lyons cruell bayting,
Corrupted had th' ayre with his noysome breath,
And powr'd on th' earth plague, pestilence, and death.
Emongst the rest a wicked maladie
Raign'd emongst men, that manie did to die,
Depriu'd of sense and ordinarie reason ;
That it to Leaches seemed strange and geason.
My fortune was mongst manie others moe,
To be partaker of their common woe ;
And my weake bodie set on fire with griefe,
Was rob'd of rest, and naturall reliefe.
In this ill plight, there came to visite mee
Some friends, who sorie my sad case to see,
Began to comfort me in chearfull wise,
And meanes of gladsome solace to deuise.

Perdie, Truly.
Bene fayne, Had faith.
To, Too.
Geason, Extraordinary.

But seeing kindly sleep refuse to doe
His office, and my feeble eyes forgoe,
They sought my troubled sense how to deceaue
With talke, that might vnquiet fancies reaue
And sitting all in seates about me round,
With pleasant tales (fit for that idle stound)
They cast in course to waste the wearie howres :
Some tolde of Ladies, and their Paramoures ;
Some of braue Knights, and their renowned Squires ;
Some of the Faeries and their strange attires ;
And some of Giaunts hard to be beleeued,
That the delight thereof me much releeued.
Amongst the rest a good old woman was,
Hight Mother *Hubberd*, who did farre surpas
The rest in honest mirth, that seem'd her well :
She when her turne was come her tale to tell,
Tolde of a strange aduenture, that betided
Betwixt the Foxe and th' Ape by him misguided ;
The which for that my sense it greatly pleased,
All were my spirite heauie and diseased,
Ile write in termes, as she the same did say,
So well as I her words remember may.
No Muses aide me needes heretoo to call ;
Base is the style, and matter meane withall.

¶ Whilome (said she) before the world was ciuill,
The Foxe and th' Ape disliking of their euill
And hard estate, determined to seeke
Their fortunes farre abroad, lyeke with his lyeke :
For both were craftie and vnhappie witted ;
Two fellowes might no where be better fitted.
The Foxe, that first this cause of griefe did finde,
Gan first thus plaine his case with words vnkinde,
Neighbour Ape, and my Gossip eke beside,
(Both two sure bands in friendship to be tide,)
To whom may I more trustely complaine
The euill plight, that doth me sore constraine,

All were, Although.

And hope thereof to finde due remedie ?
Heare then my paine and inward agonie.
Thus manie yeares I now haue spent and worne,
In meane regard, and basest fortunes scorne,
Dooing my Countrey seruice as I might,
No lesse I dare saie than the prowdest wight ;
And still I hoped to be vp aduanced,
For my good parts ; but still it hath mischaunced.
Now therefore that no lenger hope I see,
But froward fortune still to follow mee,
And losels lifted high, where I did looke,
I meane to turne the next leafe of the booke.
Yet ere that anie way I doo betake,
I meane my Gossip priuie first to make.
Ah my deare Gossip, (answer'd then the Ape,)
Deeply doo your sad words my wits awhape,
Both for because your griefe doth great appeare,
And eke because my selfe am touched neare :
For I likewise haue wasted much good time,
Still wayting to preferment vp to clime,
Whilest others alwayes haue before me stept,
And from my beard the fat away haue swept ;
That now vnto despaire I gin to growe,
And meane for better winde about to throwe.
Therefore to me, my trustie friend, aread
Thy councell : two is better than one head.
Certes (said he) I meane me to disguize
In some straunge habit, after vncouth wize,
Or like a Pilgrime, or a Lymiter,
Or like a *Gipsen*, or a Iuggeler,
And so to wander to the worlds ende,
To seeke my fortune, where I may it mend
For worse than that I haue, I cannot meete.
Wide is the world I wote and euerie streete
Is full of fortunes, and aduentures straunge

Losels, Scoundrels.
Awhape, Terrify.
Throwe, Follow.
Priuie to make, To make familiar.
Winde, Scent.
Lymiter, Friar.

Continuallie subiect vnto chaunge.
Say my faire brother now, if this deuice
Doth like you, or may you to like entice.
Surely (said th' Ape) it likes me wondrous well ;
And would ye not poore fellowship expell,
My selfe would offer you t' accompanie
In this aduentures chauncefull ieopardie.
For to wexe olde at home in idlenesse,
Is disaduentrous, and quite fortunelesse :
Abroad where change is, good may gotten bee.
The Foxe was glad, and quickly did agree :
So both resolu'd, the morrow next ensuing,
So soone as day appeared to peoples vewing,
On their intended iourney to proceede ;
And ouer night, whatso theretoo did neede,
Each did prepare, in readines to bee.
The morrow next, so soone as one might see
Light out of heauens windowes forth to looke,
Both their habiliments vnto them tooke,
And put themselues (a Gods name) on their way.
Wheneas the Ape beginning well to wey
This hard aduenture, thus began t' aduise ;
Now read Sir Reynold, as ye be right wise,
What course ye weene is best for vs to take,
That for our selues we may a liuing make.
Whether shall we professe some trade or skill ?
Or shall we varie our deuice at will,
Euen as new occasion appeares ?
Or shall we tie our selues for certaine yeares
To anie seruice, or to anie place ?
For it behoues ere that into the race
We enter, to resolue first herevpon.
Now surely brother (said the Foxe anon)
Ye haue this matter motioned in season :
For euerie thing that is begun with reason
Will come by readie meanes vnto his end ;

Reynold, Reynard. *Motioned*, Proposed.

But things miscounselled must needs miswend.
Thus therefore I aduize vpon the case,
That not to anie certaine trade or place,
Nor anie man we should our selues applie :
For why should he that is at libertie
Make himselfe bond ? sith then we are free borne,
Let vs all seruile base subiection scorne ;
And as we bee sonnes of the world so wide,
Let vs our fathers heritage diuide,
And chalenge to our selues our portions dew
Of all the patrimonie, which a few
Now hold in hugger mugger in their hand,
And all the rest doo rob of good and land.
For now a few haue all and all haue nought,
Yet all be brethren ylike dearly bought :
There is no right in this partition,
Ne was it so by institution
Ordained first, ne by the law of Nature,
But that she gaue like blessing to each creture
As well of worldly liuelode as of life,
That there might be no difference nor strife,
Nor ought cald mine or thine : thrice happie then
Was the condition of mortall men.
That was the golden age of *Saturne* old,
But this might better be the world of gold :
For without golde now nothing wilbe got.
Therefore (if please you) this shalbe our plot
We will not be of anie occupation,
Let such vile vassalls borne to base vocation
Drudge in the world, and for their liuing droyle
Which haue no wit to liue withouten toyle.
But we will walke about the world at pleasure
Like two free men, and make our ease a treasure.
Free men some beggers call, but they be free,
And they which call them so more beggers bee :
For they doo swinke and sweate to feed the other,

Miswend, Miscarry. *Hugger mugger*, Concealment.
Droyle, Slave. *Swinke*, Toil.

Who liue like Lords of that which they doo gather,
And yet doo neuer thanke them for the same,
But as their due by Nature doo it clame.
Such will we fashion both our selues to bee,
Lords of the world, and so will wander free
Where so vs listeth, vncontrol'd of anie :
Hard is our hap, if we (emongst so manie)
Light not on some that may our state amend ;
Sildome but some good commeth ere the end.
Well seemd the Ape to like this ordinaunce :
Yet well considering of the circumstaunce,
As pausing in great doubt awhile he staid,
And afterwards with graue aduizement said ;
I cannot my lief brother like but well
The purpose of the complot which ye tell :
For well I wot (compar'd to all the rest
Of each degree) that Beggers life is best :
And they that thinke themselues the best of all,
Oft-times to begging are content to fall.
But this I wot withall that we shall ronne
Into great daunger like to bee vndonne,
Thus wildly to wander in the worlds eye,
Without pasport or good warrantie,
For feare least we like rogues should be reputed,
And for eare marked beasts abroad be bruted :
Therefore I read, that we our counsells call,
How to preuent this mischiefe ere it fall,
And how we may with most securitie,
Beg amongst those that beggers doo defie.
Right well deere Gossip ye aduized haue,
(Said then the Foxe) but I this doubt will saue :
For ere we farther passe, I will deuise
A pasport for vs both in fittest wize,
And by the names of Souldiers vs protect ;
That now is thought a ciuile begging sect.
Be you the Souldier, for you likest are

Aduizement, Consideration.

For manly semblance, and small skill in warre :
I will but wayte on you, and as occasion
Falls out, my selfe fit for the same will fashion.
The Pasport ended, both they forward went,
The Ape clad Souldierlike, fit for th' intent,
In a blew iacket with a crosse of redd
And manie slits, as if that he had shedd
Much blood throgh many wounds therein receaued,
Which had the vse of his right arme bereaued ;
Vpon his head an old Scotch cap he wore,
With a plume feather all to peeces tore :
His breeches were made after the new cut,
Al Portugese, loose like an emptie gut ;
And his hose broken high aboue the heeling,
And his shooes beaten out with traueling.
But neither sword nor dagger he did beare,
Seemes that no foes reuengement he did feare ;
In stead of them a handsome bat he held,
On which he leaned, as one farre in elde.
Shame light on him, that through so false illusion,
Doth turne the name of Souldiers to abusion,
And that, which is the noblest mysterie,
Brings to reproach and common infamie.
Long they thus trauailed, yet neuer met
Aduenture, which might them a working set :
Yet manie waies they sought, and manie tryed :
Yet for their purposes none fit espyed.
At last they chaunst to meete vpon the way
A simple husbandman in garments gray ;
Yet though his vesture were but meane and bace,
A good yeoman he was of honest place,
And more for thrift did care than for gay clothing :
Gay without good, is good hearts greatest loathing.
The Foxe him spying, bad the Ape him dight
To play his part, for loe he was in sight,
That (if he er'd not) should them entertaine,

Bat, Stick. *Elde*, Age. *Abusion*, Abuse.

And yeeld them timely profite for their paine.
Eftsoones the Ape himselfe gan vp to reare,
And on his shoulders high his bat to beare,
As if good seruice he were fit to doo ;
But little thrift for him he did it too :
And stoutly forward he his steps did straine,
That like a handsome swaine it him became :
When as they nigh approached, that good man
Seeing them wander loosly, first began
T' enquire of custome, what and whence they were ?
To whom the Ape, I am a Souldiere,
That late in warres haue spent my deerest blood,
And in long seruice lost both limbs and good,
And now constrain'd that trade to ouergiue,
I driuen am to seeke some meanes to liue :
Which might it you in pitie please t' afford,
I would be readie both in deed and word,
To doo you faithfull seruice all my dayes.
This yron world (that same he weeping sayes)
Brings downe the stowtest hearts to lowest state :
For miserie doth brauest mindes abate,
And make them seeke for that they wont to scorne,
Of fortune and of hope at once forlorne.
The honest man, that heard him thus complaine,
Was grieu'd, as he had felt part of his paine ;
And well disposd' him some reliefe to showe,
Askt if in husbandrie he ought did knowe,
To plough, to plant, to reap, to rake, to sowe,
To hedge, to ditch, to thrash, to thetch, to mowe ;
Or to what labour els he was prepar'd ?
For husbands life is labourous and hard.
Whenas the Ape him hard so much to talke
Of labour, that did from his liking balke,
He would haue slipt the coller handsomly,
And to him said ; good Sir, full glad am I,
To take what paines may anie liuing wight :

Hard, Heard. *Balke*, Stray.

But my late maymed limbs lack wonted might
To doo their kindly seruices, as needeth :
Scarce this right hand the mouth with diet feedeth,
So that it may no painfull worke endure,
Ne to strong labour can it selfe enure.
But if that anie other place you haue,
Which askes small paines, but thriftines to saue,
Or care to ouer looke, or trust to gather,
Ye may me trust as your owne ghostly father.
With that the husbandman gan him auize
That it for him were fittest exercise
Cattell to keep, or grounds to ouersee ;
And asked him, if he could willing bee
To keep his sheep, or to attend his swyne,
Or watch his mares, or take his charge of kyne ?
Gladly (said he) what euer such like paine
Ye put on me, I will the same sustaine :
But gladliest I of your fleecie sheepe
(Might it you please) would take on me the keep.
For ere that vnto armes I me betooke,
Vnto my fathers sheepe I vsde to looke,
That yet the skill thereof I haue not loste :
Thereto right well this Curdog by my coste
(Meaning the Foxe) will serue, my sheepe to gather,
And driue to follow after their Belwether.
The Husbandman was meanly well content,
Triall to make of his endeuourment,
And home him leading, lent to him the charge
Of all his flocke, with libertie full large,
Giuing accompt of th' annuall increace
Both of their lambes, and of their woolley fleece.
Thus is this Ape become a shepheard swaine
And the false Foxe his dog (God giue them paine)
For ere the yeare haue halfe his course out-run,
And doo returne from whence he first begun,
They shall him make an ill accompt of thrift.

Meanly, Fairly.

Now whenas Time flying with winges swift,
Expired had the terme, that these two iauels
Should render vp a reckning of their trauels
Vnto their master, which it of them sought,
Exceedingly they troubled were in thought,
Ne wist what answere vnto him to frame,
Ne how to scape great punishment, or shame,
For their false treason and vile theeuerie.
For not a lambe of all their flockes supply
Had they to shew : but euer as they bred,
They slue them, and vpon their fleshes fed :
For that disguised Dog lou'd blood to spill,
And drew the wicked Shepheard to his will.
So twixt them both they not a lambkin left,
And when lambes fail'd, the old sheepes liues they reft ;
That how t' acquite themselues vnto their Lord,
They were in doubt, and flatly set abord.
The Foxe then counsel'd th' Ape, for to require
Respite till morrow, t' answere his desire :
For times delay new hope of helpe still breeds.
The goodman granted, doubting nought their deeds,
And bad, next day that all should readie be.
But they more subtill meaning had than he :
For the next morrowes meed they closely ment,
For feare of afterclaps for to preuent.
And that same euening, when all shrowded were
In careles sleep, they without care or feare,
Cruelly fell vpon their flock in folde.
And of them slew at pleasure what they wolde :
Of which whenas they feasted had their fill,
For a full complement of all their ill,
They stole away, and tooke their hastie flight
Carried in clowdes of all-concealing night.
So was the husbandman left to his losse,

Iauels, Rascals. *Theeuerie*, Theft.
Flatly set abord, Absolutely set adrift.
Meed, Requital. *Afterclaps*, Unexpected strokes.

And they vnto their fortunes change to tosse.
After which sort they wandered long while,
Abusing manie through their cloaked guile ;
That at the last they gan to be descryed
Of euerie one, and all their sleights espyed.
So as their begging now them failed quyte ;
For none would giue, but all men would them wyte :
Yet would they take no paines to get their liuing,
But seeke some other way to gaine by giuing,
Much like to begging but much better named ;
For manie beg, which are thereof ashamed.
And now the Foxe had gotten him a gowne,
And th' Ape a cassocke sidelong hanging downe ;
For they their occupation meant to change,
And now in other state abroad to range :
For since their souldiers pas no better spedd,
They forg'd another, as for Clerkes booke-redd.
Who passing foorth, as their aduentures fell,
Through manie haps, which needs not here to tell ;
At length chaunst with a formall Priest to meete,
Whom they in ciuill manner first did greete,
And after askt an almes for Gods deare loue.
The man straight way his choler vp did moue,
And with reproachfull tearmes gan them reuile,
For following that trade so base and vile ;
And askt what license, or what Pas they had ?
Ah (said the Ape as sighing wondrous sad)
Its an hard case, when men of good deseruing
Must either driuen be perforce to steruing,
Or asked for their pas by euerie squib,
That list at will them to reuile or snib :
And yet (God wote) small oddes I often see
Twixt them that aske, and them that asked bee.
Natheles because you shall not vs misdeeme,

Wyte, Censure. *Pas*, Passport.
Spedd, Succeeded. *Formall*, Regular.
His choler vp did moue, Lost his temper.
Squib, Paltry, trifling fellow. *Snib*, Reprove.

But that we are as honest as we seeme,
Yee shall our pasport at your pleasure see,
And then ye will (I hope) well mooued bee.
Which when the Priest beheld, he vew'd it nere,
As if therein some text he studying were,
But little els (God wote) could thereof skill :
For read he could not euidence, nor will,
Ne tell a written word, ne write a letter,
Ne make one title worse, ne make one better :
Of such deep learning little had he neede,
Ne yet of Latine, ne of Greeke, that breede
Doubts mongst Diuines, and difference of texts,
From whence arise diuersitie of sects,
And hatefull heresies, of God abhor'd :
But this good Sir did follow the plaine word,
Ne medled with their controuersies vaine.
All his care was, his seruice well to saine,
And to read Homelies vpon holidayes :
When that was done, he might attend his playes ;
An easie life, and fit high God to please.
He hauing ouerlookt their pas at ease,
Gan at the length them to rebuke againe,
That no good trade of life did entertaine,
But lost their time in wandring loose abroad,
Seeing the world, in which they bootles boad,
Had wayes enough for all therein to liue ;
Such grace did God vnto his creatures giue.
Said then the Foxe ; who hath the world not tride,
From the right way full eath may wander wide.
We are but Nouices, new come abroad,
We haue not yet the tract of anie troad,
Nor on vs taken anie state of life,
But readie are of anie to make preife.
Therefore might please you, which the world haue proued,

Skill, Perceive.
Bootles boad, Lived unprofitably.
Tract, Track.
Saine, Say.
Eath, Easily.
Preife, Trial.

Vs to aduise, which forth but lately moued,
Of some good course, that we might vndertake ;
Ye shall for euer vs your bondmen make.
The Priest gan wexe halfe proud to be so praide,
And thereby willing to affoord them aide ;
It seemes (said he) right well that ye be Clerks,
Both by your wittie words, and by your werks.
Is not that name enough to make a liuing
To him that hath a whit of Natures giuing ?
How manie honest men see ye arize
Daylie thereby, and grow to goodly prize ?
To Deanes, to Archdeacons, to Commissaries,
To Lords, to Principalls, to Prebendaries ;
All iolly Prelates, worthie rule to beare,
Who euer them enuie : yet spite bites neare.
Why should ye doubt then, but that ye likewise
Might vnto some of those in time arise ?
In the meane time to liue in good estate,
Louing that love, and hating those that hate ;
Being some honest Curate, or some Vicker
Content with little in condition sicker.
Ah but (said th' Ape) the charge is wondrous great,
To feed mens soules, and hath an heauie threat.
To feede mens soules (quoth he) is not in man :
For they must feed themselves, doo what we can.
We are but charg'd to lay the meate before :
Eate they that list, we need to doo no more.
But God it is that feedes them with his grace,
The bread of life powr'd downe from heauenly place.
Therefore said he, that with the budding rod
Did rule the Iewes, *All shalbe taught of God.*
That same hath Iesus Christ now to him raught,
By whom the flock is rightly fed, and taught :
He is the Shepheard, and the Priest is hee ;
We but his shepheard swaines ordain'd to bee.
Therefore herewith doo not your selfe dismay ;

Sicker, Secure. *Raught*, Granted.

Ne is the paines so great, but beare ye may ;
For not so great as it was wont of yore,
It's now a dayes, ne halfe so streight and sore :
They whilome vsed duly euerie day
Their seruice and their holie things to say,
At morne and euen, besides their Anthemes sweete,
Their penie Masses, and their Complynes meete,
Their Diriges, their Trentals, and their shrifts ;
Their memories, their singings, and their gifts.
Now all those needlesse works are laid away :
Now once a weeke vpon the Sabbath day,
It is enough to doo our small deuotion,
And then to follow any merrie motion.
Ne are we tyde to fast, but when we list,
Ne to weare garments base of wollen twist,
But with the finest silkes vs to aray,
That before God we may appeare more gay,
Resembling *Aarons* glorie in his place :
For farre vnfit it is, that person bace
Should with vile cloaths approach Gods maiestie,
Whom no vncleannes may approachen nie :
Or that all men, which anie master serue,
Good garments for their seruice should deserue ;
But he that serues the Lord of hoasts most high,
And that in highest place, t' approach him nigh,
And all the peoples prayers to present
Before his throne, as on ambassage sent
Both too and fro, should not deserue to weare
A garment better, than of wooll or heare.
Beside we may haue lying by our sides
Our louely Lasses, or bright shining Brides :
We be not tyde to wilfull chastitie,
But haue the Gospell of free libertie.
By that he ended had his ghostly sermon,
The Foxe was well induc'd to be a Parson ;

Penie Masses, Masses at which offerings are made.
Trentals, Services of thirty masses for the dead on as many successive days. *Memories*, Services for the dead. *Nie*, Nigh.

And of the Priest eftsoones gan to enquire,
How to a Benefice he might aspire.
Marie there (said the Priest) is arte indeed.
Much good deep learning one thereout may reed,
For that the ground worke is, and end of all,
How to obtaine a Beneficiall.
First therefore, when ye haue in handsome wise
Your selfe attyred, as you can deuise,
Then to some Noble man your selfe applye,
Or other great one in the worldes eye,
That hath a zealous disposition
To God, and so to his religion :
There must thou fashion eke a godly zeale,
Such as no carpers may contrayre reueale :
For each thing fained, ought more warie bee.
There thou must walke in sober grauitee,
And seeme as Saintlike as Saint *Radegund* :
Fast much, pray oft, looke lowly on the ground,
And vnto euerie one doo curtesie meeke :
These lookes (nought saying) doo a benefice seeke,
And be thou sure one not to lacke or long.
But if thee list vnto the Court to throng,
And there to hunt after the hoped pray,
Then must thou thee dispose another way :
For there thou needs must learne, to laugh, to lie,
To face, to forge, to scoffe, to companie,
To crouche, to please, to be a beetle stock
Of thy great Masters will, to scorne, or mock :
So maist thou chaunce mock out a Benefice,
Vnlesse thou canst one coniure by deuice,
Or cast a figure for a Bishoprick :
And if one could, it were but a schoole-trick.
These be the wayes, by which without reward
Liuings in Court be gotten, though full hard.
For nothing there is done without a fee :
The Courtier needes must recompenced bee

Thereout, Thence.
Beetle stock, The stock or handle of a beetle.

With a Beneuolence, or haue in gage
The *Primitias* of your Parsonage :
Scarse can a Bishoprick forpas them by,
But that it must be gelt in priuitie.
Doo not thou therefore seeke a liuing there,
But of more priuate persons seeke elsewhere,
Whereas thou maist compound a better penie,
Ne let thy learning question'd be of anie.
For some good Gentleman that hath the right
Vnto his Church for to present a wight,
Will cope with thee in reasonable wise ;
That if the liuing yerely doo arise
To fortie pound, that then his yongest sonne
Shall twentie haue, and twentie thou hast wonne :
Thou hast it wonne, for it is of franke gift,
And he will care for all the rest to shift ;
Both that the Bishop may admit of thee,
And that therein thou maist maintained bee.
This is the way for one that is vnlern'd
Liuing to get, and not to be discern'd.
But they that are great Clerkes, haue nearer wayes,
For learning sake to liuing them to raise :
Yet manie eke of them (God wote) are driuen,
T' accept a Benefice in peeces riuen.
How saist thou (friend) haue I not well discourst
Vpon this Common place (though plaine, not wourst) ?
Better a short tale, than a bad long shriuing.
Needes anie more to learne to get a liuing ?
Now sure and by my hallidome (quoth he)
Ye a great master are in your degree :
Great thankes I yeeld you for your discipline,
And doo not doubt, but duly to encline
My wits theretoo, as ye shall shortly heare.
The Priest him wisht good speed, and well to fare.
So parted they, as eithers way them led.
But th' Ape and Foxe ere long so well them sped,

Primitias, First-fruits.

Through the Priests holesome counsell lately tought,
And throgh their owne faire handling wisely wroght,
That they a Benefice twixt them obtained ;
And craftie Reynold was a Priest ordained ;
And th' Ape his Parish Clarke procur'd to bee.
Then made they reuell route and goodly glee.
But ere long time had passed, they so ill
Did order their affaires, that th' euill will
Of all their Parishners they had constraind ;
Who to the Ordinarie of them complain'd,
How fowlie they their offices abusd',
And them of crimes and heresies accusd' ;
That Pursiuants he often for them sent :
But they neglected his commaundement.
So long persisted obstinate and bolde,
Till at the length he published to holde
A Visitation, and them cyted thether :
Then was high time their wits about to geather ;
What did they then, but made a composition
With their next neighbor Priest for light condition ;
To whom their liuing they resigned quight
For a few pence, and ran away by night.
So passing through the Countrey in disguize,
They fled farre off, where none might them surprize,
And after that long straied here and there,
Through euerie field and forrest farre and nere ;
Yet neuer found occasion for their tourne,
But almost steru'd, did much lament and mourne.
At last they chaunst to meete vpon the way
The Mule, all deckt in goodly rich aray,
With bells and bosses, that full lowdly rung,
And costly trappings, that to ground downe hung.
Lowly they him saluted in meeke wise,
But he through pride and fatnes gan despise
Their meanesse ; scarce vouchsafte them to requite.
Whereat the Foxe deep groning in his sprite,

Pursiuants, Warrant-officers.

Said, Ah sir Mule, now blessed be the day,
That I see you so goodly and so gay
In your attyres, and eke your silken hyde
Fil'd with round flesh, that euerie bone doth hide.
Seemes that in fruitfull pastures ye doo liue,
Or fortune doth you secret fauour giue.
Foolish Foxe (said the Mule) thy wretched need
Praiseth the thing that doth thy sorrow breed.
For well I weene, thou canst not but enuie
My wealth, compar'd to thine owne miserie,
That art so leane and meagre waxen late,
That scarse thy legs vphold thy feeble gate.
Ay me (said then the Foxe) whom euill hap
Vnworthy in such wretchednes doth wrap,
And makes the scorne of other beasts to bee :
But read (faire Sir, of grace) from whence come yee ?
Or what of tidings you abroad doo heare ?
Newes may perhaps some good vnweeting beare.
From royall Court I lately came (said he)
Where all the brauerie that eye may see,
And all the happinesse that heart desire,
Is to be found ; he nothing can admire,
That hath not seene that heauens portracture :
But tidings there is none I you assure,
Saue that which common is, and knowne to all,
That Courtiers as the tide doo rise and fall.
But tell vs (said the Ape) we doo you pray,
Who now in Court doth beare the greatest sway.
That if such fortune doo to vs befall,
We may seeke fauour of the best of all.
Marie (said he) the highest now in grace,
Be the wilde beasts, that swiftest are in chace ;
For in their speedie course and nimble flight
The Lyon now doth take the most delight :
But chieflie, ioyes on foote them to beholde,
Enchaste with chaine and circulet of golde :
So wilde a beast so tame ytaught to bee,

And buxome to his bands, is ioy to see.
So well his golden Circlet him beseemeth :
But his late chayne his Liege vnmeete esteemeth ;
For so braue beasts she loueth best to see,
In the wilde forrest raunging fresh and free.
Therefore if fortune thee in Court to liue,
In case thou euer there wilt hope to thriue,
To some of these thou must thy selfe apply :
Els as a thistle-downe in th' ayre doth flie,
So vainly shalt thou too and fro be tost,
And loose thy labour and thy fruitles cost.
And yet full few, which follow them I see,
For vertues bare regard aduaunced bee,
But either for some gainfull benefit,
Or that they may for their owne turnes be fit.
Nath'les perhaps ye things may handle soe,
That ye may better thriue than thousands moe.
But (said the Ape) how shall we first come in,
That after we may fauour seeke to win ?
How els (said he) but with a good bold face,
And with big words, and with a stately pace,
That men may thinke of you in generall,
That to be in you, which is not at all :
For not by that which is, the world now deemeth,
(As it was wont) but by that same that seemeth.
Ne do I doubt, but that ye well can fashion
Your selues theretoo, according to occasion :
So fare ye well, good Courtiers may ye bee ;
So proudlie neighing from them parted hee.
Then gan this craftie couple to deuize,
How for the Court themselues they might aguize :
For thither they themselues meant to addresse,
In hope to finde there happier successe ;
So well they shifted, that the Ape anon
Himselfe had cloathed like a Gentleman,
And the slie Foxe, as like to be his groome,

Buxome, Obedient. *Aguize*, Deck.

That to the Court in seemly sort they come.
Where the fond Ape himselfe vprearing hy
Vpon his tiptoes, stalketh stately by,
As if he were some great *Magnifico*,
And boldlie doth amongst the boldest go.
And his man Reynold with fine counterfesaunce
Supports his credite and his countenaunce.
Then gan the Courtiers gaze on euerie side,
And stare on him, with big lookes basen wide,
Wondring what mister wight he was, and whence :
For he was clad in strange accoustrements,
Fashion'd with queint deuises neuer seene
In Court before, yet there all fashions beene :
Yet he them in newfanglenesse did pas :
But his behauiour altogether was
Alla Turchesca, much the more admyr'd,
And his lookes loftie, as if he aspyr'd
To dignitie, and sdeign'd the low degree ;
That all which did such strangenesse in him see,
By secrete meanes gan of his state enquire,
And priuily his seruant thereto hire :
Who throughly arm'd against such couerture,
Reported vnto all, that he was sure
A noble Gentleman of high regard,
Which through the world had with long trauel far'd,
And seene the manners of all beasts on ground ;
Now here arriu'd, to see if like he found.
Thus did the Ape at first him credit gaine,
Which afterwards he wisely did maintaine
With gallant showe, and daylie more augment
Through his fine feates and Courtly complement ;
For he could play, and daunce, and vaute, and spring,
And all that els pertaines to reueling,
Onely through kindly aptnes of his ioynts.
Besides he could doo manie other poynts,

Basen wide, As wide as a basin.
Alla Turchesca, In the Turkish fashion.
Hire, Bribe. *Couerture*, Deceit.
Mister, Kind of.
Sdeign'd, Disdained.
Vaute, Leap.

The which in Court him serued to good stead :
For he mongst Ladies could their fortunes read
Out of their hands, and merie leasings tell,
And iuggle finely, that became him well :
But he so light was at legier demaine,
That what he toucht, came not to light againe ;
Yet would he laugh it out, and proudly looke,
And tell them, that they greatly him mistooke.
So would he scoffe them out with mockerie,
For he therein had great felicitie ;
And with sharp quips ioy'd others to deface,
Thinking that their disgracing did him grace :
So whilst that other like vaine wits he pleased,
And made to laugh, his heart was greatly eased.
But the right gentle minde would bite his lip,
To heare the Iauell so good men to nip :
For though the vulgar yeeld an open eare,
And common Courtiers loue to gybe and fleare
At euerie thing, which they heare spoken ill,
And the best speaches with ill meaning spill ;
Yet the braue Courtier, in whose beauteous thought
Regard of honour harbours more than ought,
Doth loath such base condition, to backbite
Anies good name for enuie or despite :
He stands on tearmes of honourable minde,
Ne will be carried with the common winde
Of Courts inconstant mutabilitie,
Ne after euerie tattling fable flie ;
But heares, and sees the follies of the rest,
And thereof gathers for himselfe the best :
He will not creepe, nor crouche with fained face,
But walkes vpright with comely stedfast pace,
And vnto all doth yeeld due curtesie ;
But not with kissed hand belowe the knee,
As that same Apish crue is wont to doo :
For he disdaines himselfe t' embase theretoo.

Leasings, Falsehoods.
Fleare, Jeer.
Iauell, Rascal.
Spill, Spoilt.

He hates fowle leasings, and vile flatterie,
Two filthie blots in noble Gentrie ;
And lothefull idlenes he doth detest,
The canker worme of euerie gentle brest ;
The which to banish with faire exercise
Of knightly feates, he daylie doth deuise :
Now menaging the mouthes of stubborne steedes,
Now practising the proofe of warlike deedes,
Now his bright armes assaying, now his speare,
Now the nigh aymed ring away to beare ;
At other times he casts to sew the chace
Of swift wilde beasts, or runne on foote a race,
T' enlarge his breath (large breath in armes most needfull)
Or els by wrestling to wex strong and heedfull,
Or his stiffe armes to stretch with Eughen bowe,
And manly legs, still passing too and fro,
Without a gowned beast him fast beside ;
A vaine ensample of the *Persian* pride,
Who after he had wonne th' *Assyrian* foe,
Did euer after scorne on foote to goe.
Thus when this Courtly Gentleman with toyle
Himselfe hath wearied, he doth recoyle
Vnto his rest, and there with sweete delight
Of Musicks skill reuiues his toyled spright,
Or els with Loues, and Ladies gentle sports,
The ioy of youth, himselfe he recomforts :
Or lastly, when the bodie list to pause,
His minde vnto the Muses he withdrawes ;
Sweete Ladie Muses, Ladies of delight,
Delights of life, and ornaments of light :
With whom he close confers with wise discourse,
Of Natures workes, of heauens continuall course,
Of forreine lands, of people different,
Of kingdomes change, of diuers gouernment,

Menaging, Handling. *Assaying*, Testing.
Aymed, Desired. *Casts to sew*, Attempts to follow.
Eughen, Yew.

Of dreadfull battailes of renowned Knights ;
With which he kindleth his ambitious sprights
To like desire and praise of noble fame,
The onely vpshot whereto he doth ayme :
For all his minde on honour fixed is,
To which he leuels all his purposis,
And in his Princes seruice spends his dayes,
Not so much for to gaine, or for to raise
Himselfe to high degree, as for his grace,
And in his liking to winne worthie place ;
Through due deserts and comely carriage,
In whatso please employ his personage,
That may be matter meete to gaine him praise ;
For he is fit to vse in all assayes,
Whether for Armes and warlike amenaunce,
Or else for wise and ciuill gouernaunce.
For he is practiz'd well in policie,
And thereto doth his Courting most applie :
To learne the enterdeale of Princes strange,
To marke th' intent of Counsells, and the change
Of states, and eke of priuate men somewhile,
Supplanted by fine falshood and faire guile ;
Of all the which he gathereth, what is fit
T' enrich the storehouse of his powerfull wit,
Which through wise speaches, and graue conference
He daylie eekes, and brings to excellence.
Such is the rightfull Courtier in his kinde :
But vnto such the Ape lent not his minde ;
Such were for him no fit companions,
Such would descrie his lewd conditions :
But the yong lustie gallants he did chose
To follow, meete to whom he might disclose
His witlesse pleasance, and ill pleasing vaine.
A thousand wayes he them could entertaine,
With all the thriftles games, that may be found

Onely, Only. *Amenaunce*, Conduct.
Policie, Statecraft. *Enterdeale*, Intercourse.
Eekes, Augments.

With mumming and with masking all around,
With dice, with cards, with balliards farre vnfit,
With shuttlecocks, misseeming manlie wit,
With courtizans, and costly riotize,
Whereof still somewhat to his share did rize :
Ne, them to pleasure, would he sometimes scorne
A Pandares coate (so basely was he borne) ;
Thereto he could fine louing verses frame,
And play the Poet oft. But ah, for shame
Let not sweete Poets praise, whose onely pride
Is vertue to aduance, and vice deride,
Be with the worke of losels wit defamed,
Ne let such verses Poetrie be named :
Yet he the name on him would rashly take,
Maugre the sacred Muses, and it make
A seruant to the vile affection
Of such, as he depended most vpon,
And with the sugrie sweete thereof allure
Chast Ladies eares to fantasies impure.
To such delights the noble wits he led
Which him relieu'd, and their vaine humours fed
With fruitles follies, and vnsound delights.
But if perhaps into their noble sprights
Desire of honor, or braue thought of armes
Did euer creepe, then with his wicked charmes
And strong conceipts he would it driue away,
Ne suffer it to house there halfe a day.
And whenso loue of letters did inspire
Their gentle wits, and kindly wise desire,
That chieflie doth each noble minde adorne,
Then he would scoffe at learning, and eke scorne
The Sectaries thereof, as people base
And simple men, which neuer came in place
Of worlds affaires, but in darke corners mewd,
Muttred of matters, as their bookes them shewd,

Balliards, Billiards. *Riotize*, Extravagance.
Losels, Profligates. *Relieu'd*, Revived.
Sectaries, Disciples.

Ne other knowledge euer did attaine,
But with their gownes their grauitie maintaine.
From them he would his impudent lewde speach
Against Gods holie Ministers oft reach,
And mocke Diuines and their profession :
What else then did he by progression,
But mocke high God himselfe, whom they professe ?
But what car'd he for God, or godlinesse ?
All his care was himselfe how to aduance,
And to vphold his courtly countenaunce
By all the cunning meanes he could deuise ;
Were it by honest wayes, or otherwise,
He made small choyce : yet sure his honestie
Got him small gaines, but shameles flatterie,
And filthie brocage, and vnseemly shifts,
And borowe base, and some good Ladies gifts :
But the best helpe, which chiefly him sustain'd,
Was his man Raynolds purchase which he gain'd.
For he was school'd by kinde in all the skill
Of close conueyance, and each practise ill
Of coosinage and cleanly knauerie,
Which oft maintain'd his masters brauerie.
Besides he vsde another slipprie slight,
In taking on himselfe in common sight,
False personages, fit for euerie sted,
With which he thousands cleanly coosined :
Now like a Merchant, Merchants to deceaue,
With whom his credite he did often leaue
In gage, for his gay Masters hopelesse dett :
Now like a Lawyer, when he land would lett,
Or sell fee-simples in his Masters name,
Which he had neuer, nor ought like the same :
Then would he be a Broker, and draw in
Both wares and money, by exchange to win :
Then would he seeme a Farmer, that would sell

Brocage, Procuration. *Borowe*, Security.
Coosinage, Fraud. *Cleanly*, Artful.
Sted, Situation.

Bargaines of woods, which he did lately fell,
Or corne, or cattle, or such other ware,
Thereby to coosin men not well aware ;
Of all the which there came a secret fee
To th' Ape, that he his countenaunce might bee.
Besides all this, he vsd' oft to beguile
Poore suters, that in Court did haunt some while :
For he would learne their busines secretly,
And then informe his Master hastely,
That he by meanes might cast them to preuent,
And beg the sute, the which the other ment.
Or otherwise false Reynold would abuse
The simple Suter, and wish him to chuse
His Master, being one of great regard
In Court, to compas anie sute not hard,
In case his paines were recompenst with reason :
So would he worke the silly man by treason
To buy his Masters friuolous good will,
That had not power to doo him good or ill.
So pitifull a thing is Suters state.
Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to Court, to sue for had ywist,
That few haue found, and manie one hath mist ;
Full little knowest thou that hast not tride,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide :
To loose good dayes, that might be better spent ;
To wast long nights in pensiue discontent ;
To speed to day, to be put back to morrow ;
To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow ;
To haue thy Princes grace, yet want her Peeres ;
To haue thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres ;
To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares ;
To eate thy heart through comfortlesse dispaires ;
To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,
To spend, to giue, to want, to be vndonne.
Vnhappie wight, borne to desastrous end,

Countenaunce might bee, Might make a good show.
Cast, Attempt. *Ywist*, Known.

That doth his life in so long tendance spend.
Who euer leaues sweete home, where meane estate
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,
Findes all things needfull for contentment meeke ;
And will to Court for shadowes vaine to seeke,
Or hope to gaine, himselfe will a daw trie :
That curse God send vnto mine enemie.
For none but such as this bold Ape vnblest,
Can euer thriue in that vnluckie quest ;
Or such as hath a Reynold to his man,
That by his shifts his Master furnish can.
But yet this Foxe could not so closely hide
His craftie feates, but that they were descride
At length, by such as sate in iustice seate,
Who for the same him fowlie did entreate ;
And hauing worthily him punished,
Out of the Court for euer banished.
And now the Ape wanting his huckster man,
That wont prouide his necessaries, gan
To growe into great lacke, ne could vpholde
His countenaunce in those his garments olde :
Ne new ones could he easily prouide,
Though all men him vncased gan deride,
Like as a Puppit placed in a play,
Whose part once past all men bid take away :
So that he driuen was to great distresse,
And shortly brought to hopelesse wretchednesse.
Then closely as he might, he cast to leaue
The Court, not asking any passe or leaue ;
But ran away in his rent rags by night,
Ne euer stayd in place, ne spake to wight,
Till that the Foxe his copesmate he had found,
To whome complayning his vnhappy stound,
At last againe with him in trauell ioynd,
And with him far'd some better chaunce to fynde.
So in the world long time they wandered,

Tendance, Waiting in expectation. *Daw*, Fool.
Lacke, Loss. *Vncased*, Stripped. *Copesmate*, Accomplice.

And mickle want and hardnesse suffered ;
That them repented much so foolishly
To come so farre to seeke for misery,
And leaue the sweetnes of contented home,
Though eating hipps, and drinking watry fome.
Thus as they them complayned too and fro,
Whilst through the forest rechlesse they did goe,
Lo where they spide, how in a gloomy glade,
The Lyon sleeping lay in secret shade,
His Crowne and Scepter lying him beside,
And hauing doft for heate his dreadfull hide :
Which when they sawe, the Ape was sore afrayde,
And would haue fled with terror all dismayde.
But him the Foxe with hardy words did stay,
And bad him put all cowardize away :
For now was time (if euer they would hope)
To ayme their counsels to the fairest scope,
And them for euer highly to aduance,
In case the good which their owne happie chaunce
Them freely offred, they would wisely take.
Scarse could the Ape yet speake, so did he quake,
Yet as he could, he askt how good might growe,
Where nought but dread and death do seeme in show.
Now (sayd he) whiles the Lyon sleepeth sound,
May we his Crowne and Mace take from the ground,
And eke his skinne the terror of the wood,
Wherewith we may our selues (if we thinke good)
Make Kings of Beasts, and Lords of forests all,
Subiect vnto that powre imperiall.
Ah but (sayd the Ape) who is so bold a wretch,
That dare his hardy hand to those outstretch :
When as he knowes his meede, if he be spide,
To be a thousand deathes, and shame beside ?
Fond Ape (sayd then the Foxe) into whose brest
Neuer crept thought of honor, nor braue gest,
Who will not venture life a King to be,

Hipps, Fruit of the wild rose.

And rather rule and raigne in soueraign see,
Than dwell in dust inglorious and bace,
Where none shall name the number of his place ?
One ioyous houre in blisfull happines,
I chose before a life of wretchednes.
Be therefore counselled herein by me,
And shake off this vile harted cowardree,
If he awake, yet is not death the next,
For we may coulor it with some pretext
Of this, or that, that may excuse the cryme :
Else we may flye ; thou to a tree mayst clyme,
And I creepe vnder ground ; both from his reach :
Therefore be rul'd to doo as I doo teach.
The Ape, that earst did nought but chill and quake,
Now gan some courage vnto him to take,
And was content to attempt that enterprise,
Tickled with glorie and rash couetise.
But first gan question, whether should assay
Those royall ornaments to steale away ?
Marie that shall your selfe (quoth he theretoo)
For ye be fine and nimble it to doo ;
Of all the beasts which in the forrests bee,
Is not a fitter for this turne than yee :
Therefore, mine owne deare brother take good hart,
And euer thinke a Kingdome is your part.
Loath was the Ape, though praised, to aduenter,
Yet faintly gan into his worke to enter,
Afraid of euerie leafe, that stir'd him by,
And euerie stick, that vnderneath did ly ;
Vpon his tiptoes nicely he vp went,
For making noyse, and still his eare he lent
To euerie sound, that vnder heauen blew,
Now went, now stept, now crept, now backward drew,
That it good sport had been him to haue eyde :
Yet at the last (so well he him applyde,)

Earst, At first. *Whether*, Who.
Nicely, Cautiously. *Eyde*, Seen.

Through his fine handling, and cleanly play,
He all those royall signes had stolne away,
And with the Foxes helpe them borne aside,
Into a secret corner vnespide,
Whither whenas they came, they fell at words,
Whether of them should be the Lord of Lords :
For th' Ape was stryfull, and ambicious ;
And the Foxe guilefull, and most couetous,
That neither pleased was, to haue the rayne
Twixt them diuided into euen twaine,
But either (algates) would be Lords alone :
For Loue and Lordship bide no paragone.
I am most worthie (said the Ape) sith I
For it did put my life in ieopardie :
Thereto I am in person, and in stature
Most like a man, the Lord of euerie creature,
So that it seemeth I was made to raigne,
And borne to be a Kingly soueraigne.
Nay (said the Foxe) Sir Ape you are astray :
For though to steale the Diademe away
Were the worke of your nimble hand, yet I
Did first deuise the plot by pollicie ;
So that it wholly springeth from my wit :
For which also I claime my selfe more fit
Than you, to rule : for gouernment of state
Will without wisedome soone be ruinate.
And where ye claime your selfe for outward shape
Most like a man, Man is not like an Ape
In his chiefe parts, that is, in wit and spirite :
But I therein most like to him doo merite
For my slie wyles and subtill craftinesse,
The title of the Kingdome to possesse.
Nath'les (my brother) since we passed are
Vnto this point, we will appease our iarre,
And I with reason meete will rest content,

Cleanly, Artful. *Algates*, By any means.
Bide, Endure. *Pollicie*, Statecraft.
Iarre, Dissension.

That ye shall haue both crowne and gouernment,
Vpon condition, that ye ruled bee
In all affaires, and counselled by mee ;
And that ye let none other euer drawe
Your minde from me, but keepe this as a lawe :
And herevpon an oath vnto me plight.
The Ape was glad to end the strife so light,
And thereto swore : for who would not oft sweare,
And oft vnsweare, a Diademe to beare ?
Then freely vp those royall spoyles he tooke,
Yet at the Lyons skin he inly quooke ;
But it dissembled, and vpon his head
The Crowne, and on his backe the skin he did,
And the false Foxe him helped to array.
Then when he was all dight he tooke his way
Into the forest, that he might be seene
Of the wilde beasts in his new glory sheene.
There the two first, whome he encountred, were
The Sheepe and th' Asse, who striken both with feare
At sight of him, gan fast away to flye,
But vnto them the Foxe alowd did cry,
And in the Kings name bad them both to stay,
Vpon the payne that thereof follow may.
Hardly naythles were they restrayned so,
Till that the Foxe forth toward them did goe,
And there disswaded them from needlesse feare,
For that the King did fauour to them beare ;
And therefore dreadles bad them come to Corte :
For no wild beasts should do them any torte
There or abroad, ne would his maiestye
Vse them but well, with gracious clemencye,
As whome he knew to him both fast and true ;
So he perswaded them, with homage due
Themselues to humble to the Ape prostrate,
Who gently to them bowing in his gate,
Receyued them with chearefull entertayne.

Light, Easily.
Torte, Injury.
Sheene, Fair.
Gate, Gait.

Thenceforth proceeding with his princely trayne,
He shortly met the Tygre, and the Bore,
Which with the simple Camell raged sore
In bitter words, seeking to take occasion,
Vpon his fleshly corpse to make inuasion :
But soone as they this mock-King did espy,
Their troublous strife they stinted by and by,
Thinking indeed that it the Lyon was :
He then to proue, whether his powre would pas
As currant, sent the Foxe to them streight way,
Commaunding them their cause of strife bewray ;
And if that wrong on eyther side there were,
That he should warne the wronger to appeare
The morrow next at Court, it to defend ;
In the meane time vpon the King t' attend.
The subtile Foxe so well his message sayd,
That the proud beasts him readily obayd :
Whereby the Ape in wondrous stomack woxe,
Strongly encorag'd by the crafty Foxe ;
That King indeed himselfe he shortly thought,
And all the Beasts him feared as they ought :
And followed vnto his palaice hye,
Where taking Conge, each one by and by
Departed to his home in dreadfull awe,
Full of the feared sight, which late they sawe.
The Ape thus seized of the Regall throne,
Eftsones by counsell of the Foxe alone,
Gan to prouide for all things in assurance,
That so his rule might lenger haue endurance.
First to his Gate he pointed a strong gard,
That none might enter but with issue hard :
Then for the safegard of his personage,
He did appoint a warlike equipage
Of forreine beasts, not in the forest bred,
But part by land, and part by water fed ;

Bewray, Disclose.
Conge, Farewell.
Pointed, Appointed.
Stomack, Spirit.
Seized, Possessed.
Hard, Heard.

For tyrannie is with strange ayde supported.
Then vnto him all monstrous beasts resorted
Bred of two kindes, as Griffons, Minotaures,
Crocodiles, Dragons, Beauers, and Centaures :
With those himselfe he strengthned mightelie,
That feare he neede no force of enemie.
Then gan he rule and tyrannize at will,
Like as the Foxe did guide his graceles skill,
And all wylde beasts made vassals of his pleasures,
And with their spoyles enlarg'd his priuate treasures.
No care of iustice, nor no rule of reason,
No temperance, nor no regard of season
Did thenceforth euer enter in his minde,
But crueltie, the signe of currish kinde,
And sdeignfull pride, and wilfull arrogaunce ;
Such followes those whom fortune doth aduaunce.
But the false Foxe most kindly plaid his part :
For whatsoeuer mother wit, or arte
Could worke, he put in proofe : no practise slie,
No counterpoint of cunning policie,
No reach, no breach, that might him profit bring,
But he the same did to his purpose wring.
Nought suffered he the Ape to giue or graunt,
But through his hand must passe the Fiaunt.
All offices, all leases by him lept,
And of them all whatso he likte, he kept.
Iustice he solde iniustice for to buy,
And for to purchase for his progeny.
Ill might it prosper, that ill gotten was,
But so he got it, little did he pas.
He fed his cubs with fat of all the soyle,
And with the sweete of others sweating toyle,
He crammed them with crumbs of Benefices,
And fild their mouthes with meeds of malefices,
He cloathed them with all colours saue white,
And loded them with lordships and with might,

Kinde, Nature. *Fiaunt*, Warrant. *Malefices*, Evil deeds.

So much as they were able well to beare,
That with the weight their backs nigh broken were ;
He chaffred Chayres in which Churchmen were set,
And breach of lawes to priuie ferme did let ;
No statute so established might bee,
Nor ordinaunce so needfull, but that hee
Would violate, though not with violence,
Yet vnder colour of the confidence
The which the Ape repos'd in him alone,
And reckned him the kingdomes corner stone.
And euer when he ought would bring to pas,
His long experience the platforme was :
And when he ought not pleasing would put by,
The cloke was care of thrift, and husbandry,
For to encrease the common treasures store ;
But his owne treasure he encreased more
And lifted vp his loftie towres thereby,
That they began to threat the neighbour sky ;
The whiles the Princes pallaces fell fast
To ruine : (for what thing can euer last ?)
And whilest the other Peeres for pouertie
Were forst their auncient houses to let lie,
And their olde Castles to the ground to fall,
Which their forefathers famous ouer all
Had founded for the Kingdomes ornament,
And for their memories long moniment.
But he no count made of Nobilitie,
Nor the wilde beasts whom armes did glorifie,
The Realmes chiefe strength and girlond of the crowne,
All these through fained crimes he thrust adowne,
Or made them dwell in darknes of disgrace :
For none, but whom he list might come in place.
Of men of armes he had but small regard,
But kept them lowe, and streigned verie hard.
For men of learning little he esteemed ;

Chaffred, Sold. *Breach*, Violation.
Ferme, Rent. *Ordinaunce*, Decree.
Streigned, Restrained.

His wisedome he aboue their learning deemed.
As for the rascall Commons least he cared ;
For not so common was his bountie shared ;
Let God (said he) if please, care for the manie,
I for my selfe must care before els anie :
So did he good to none, to manie ill,
So did he all the kingdome rob and pill,
Yet none durst speake, ne none durst of him plaine ;
So great he was in grace, and rich through gaine.
Ne would he anie let to haue accesse
Vnto the Prince, but by his owne addresse :
For all that els did come, were sure to faile,
Yet would he further none but for auaile.
For on a time the Sheepe, to whom of yore
The Foxe had promised of friendship store,
What time the Ape the kingdome first did gaine,
Came to the Court, her case there to complaine,
How that the Wolfe her mortall enemie
Had sithence slaine her Lambe most cruellie ;
And therefore crau'd to come vnto the King,
To let him knowe the order of the thing.
Soft Gooddie Sheepe (then said the Foxe) not soe :
Vnto the King so rash ye may not goe,
He is with greater matter busied,
Than a Lambe, or the Lambes owne mothers hed.
Ne certes may I take it well in part,
That ye my cousin Wolfe so fowly thwart,
And seeke with slaunder his good name to blot :
For there was cause, els doo it he would not.
Therefore surcease good Dame, and hence depart.
So went the Sheepe away with heauie hart.
So manie moe, so euerie one was vsed,
That to giue largely to the boxe refused.
Now when high *Ioue*, in whose almightie hand
The care of Kings, and power of Empires stand,
Sitting one day within his turret hye,

Plaine, Complain. *Sithence*, Since. *Surcease*, Stop.

From whence he vewes with his blacklidded-eye,
Whatso the heauen in his wide vawte containes,
And all that in the deepest earth remaines,
The troubled kingdome of wilde beasts behelde,
Whom not their kindly Souereigne did welde,
But an vsurping Ape with guile suborn'd,
Had all subuerst, he sdeignfully it scorn'd
In his great heart, and hardly did refraine,
But that with thunder bolts he had him slaine,
And driuen downe to hell, his dewest meed :
But him auizing, he that dreadfull deed
Forbore, and rather chose with scornfull shame
Him to auenge, and blot his brutish name
Vnto the world, that neuer after anie
Should of his race be voyd of infamie :
And his false counsellor, the cause of all,
To damne to death, or dole perpetuall,
From whence he neuer should be quit, nor stal'd.
Forthwith he *Mercurie* vnto him cal'd,
And bad him flie with neuer resting speed
Vnto the forrest, where wilde beasts doo breed,
And there enquiring priuily, to learne,
What did of late chaunce to the Lyon stearne,
That he rul'd not the Empire, as he ought ;
And whence were all those plaints vnto him brought
Of wrongs and spoyles, by saluage beasts committed ;
Which done, he bad the Lyon be remitted
Into his seate, and those same treachours vile
Be punished for their presumptuous guile.
The Sonne of *Maia* soone as he receiu'd
That word, streight with his azure wings he cleau'd
The liquid clowdes, and lucid firmament ;
Ne staid, till that he came with steep descent
Vnto the place, where his prescript did showe.

Vawte, Vault.
Dewest, Appropriate.
Stal'd, Released.
Treachours, Cheats.
Subuerst, Subverted.
Auizing, Reflecting.
Stearne, Stern.
Prescript, Instruction.

There stouping like an arrowe from a bowe,
He soft arriued on the grassie plaine,
And fairly paced forth with easie paine,
Till that vnto the Pallace nigh he came.
Then gan he to himselfe new shape to frame,
And that faire face, and that Ambrosiall hew,
Which wonts to decke the Gods immortall crew,
And beautefie the shinie firmament,
He doft, vnfit for that rude rabblement.
So standing by the gates in strange disguize,
He gan enquire of some in secret wize,
Both of the King, and of his gouernment,
And of the Foxe, and his false blandishment :
And euermore he heard each one complaine
Of foule abuses both in realme and raine.
Which yet to proue more true, he meant to see,
And an ey-witnes of each thing to bee.
Tho on his head his dreadfull hat he dight,
Which maketh him inuisible in sight,
And mocketh th' eyes of all the lookers on,
Making them thinke it but a vision.
Through power of that, he runnes through enemies swerds ;
Through power of that, he passeth through the herds
Of rauenous wilde beasts, and doth beguile
Their greedie mouthes of the expected spoyle ;
Through power of that, his cunning theeueries
He wonts to worke, that none the same espies ;
And through the power of that, he putteth on
What shape he list in apparition.
That on his head he wore, and in his hand
He tooke *Caduceus* his snakie wand,
With which the damned ghosts he gouerneth,
And furies rules, and Tartare tempereth.

Stouping, Swooping.
Shinie, Bright.
Swerds, Swords.
Theeueries, Thefts.
Paine, Care.
Blandishment, Cajolery.
Beguile, Deprive.
Tartare, The infernal regions.

With that he causeth sleep to seize the eyes,
And feare the harts of all his enemyes ;
And when him list, an vniuersall night
Throughout the world he makes on euerie wight ;
As when his Syre with *Alcumena* lay.
Thus dight, into the Court he tooke his way,
Both through the gard, which neuer did descride,
And through the watchmen, who him neuer spide :
Thenceforth he past into each secrete part,
Whereas he saw, that sorely grieu'd his hart,
Each place abounding with fowle iniuries,
And fild with treasure rackt with robberies :
Each place defilde with blood of guiltles beasts,
Which had been slaine, to serue the Apes beheasts ;
Gluttonie, malice, pride, and couetize,
And lawlesnes raigning with riotize ;
Besides the infinite extortions,
Done through the Foxes great oppressions,
That the complaints thereof could not be tolde.
Which when he did with lothfull eyes beholde,
He would no more endure, but came his way,
And cast to seeke the Lion, where he may,
That he might worke the auengement for this shame,
On those two caytiues, which had bred him blame.
And seeking all the forrest busily,
At last he found, where sleeping he did ly :
The wicked weed, which there the Foxe did lay,
From vnderneath his head he tooke away,
And then him waking, forced vp to rize.
The Lion looking vp gan him auize,
As one late in a traunce, what had of long
Become of him : for fantasie is strong.
Arise (said *Mercurie*) thou sluggish beast,
That here liest senseles, like the corpse deceast,
The whilste thy kingdome from thy head is rent,
And thy throne royall with dishonour blent :

Lothfull, Reluctant. *Caytiues*, Villains.

Arise, and doo thy selfe redeeme from shame,
And be aueng'd on those that breed thy blame.
Thereat enraged, soone he gan vpstart,
Grinding his teeth, and grating his great hart,
And rouzing vp himselfe, for his rough hide
He gan to reach ; but no where it espide.
Therewith he gan full terribly to rore,
And chafte at that indignitie right sore.
But when his Crowne and scepter both he wanted,
Lord how he fum'd, and sweld, and rag'd, and panted ;
And threatned death, and thousand deadly dolours
To them that had purloyn'd his Princely honours.
With that in hast, disroabed as he was,
He toward his owne Pallace forth did pas ;
And all the way he roared as he went,
That all the forrest with astonishment
Thereof did tremble, and the beasts therein
Fled fast away from that so dreadfull din.
At last he came vnto his mansion,
Where all the gates he found fast lockt anon,
And manie warders round about them stood :
With that he roar'd alowd, as he were wood,
That all the Pallace quaked at the stound,
As if it quite were riuen from the ground,
And all within were dead and hartles left ;
And th' Ape himselfe, as one whose wits were reft,
Fled here and there, and euerie corner sought,
To hide himselfe from his owne feared thought.
But the false Foxe when he the Lion heard,
Fled closely forth, streightway of death afeard,
And to the Lion came, full lowly creeping,
With fained face, and watrie eyne halfe weeping,
T' excuse his former treason and abusion,
And turning all vnto the Apes confusion :
Nath'les the royall Beast forbore beleeuing,

Breed thy blame, Cause thy hurt.
Grating, Fretting. *Anon*, Immediately.
Wood, Mad. *Closely*, Secretly.

But bad him stay at ease till further preeuing.
Then when he saw no entrance to him graunted,
Roaring yet lowder that all harts it daunted,
Vpon those gates with force he fiercely flewe,
And rending them in pieces, felly slewe
Those warders strange, and all that els he met.
But th' Ape still flying, he no where might get:
From rowme to rowme, from beame to beame he fled
All breathles, and for feare now almost ded:
Yet him at last the Lyon spide, and caught,
And forth with shame vnto his iudgement brought.
Then all the beasts he causd' assembled bee,
To heare their doome, and sad ensample see:
The Foxe, first Author of that treacherie,
He did vncase, and then away let flie.
But th' Apes long taile (which then he had) he quight
Cut off, and both eares pared of their hight;
Since which, all Apes but halfe their eares haue left,
And of their tailes are vtterlie bereft.

So Mother *Hubberd* her discourse did end:
Which pardon me, if I amisse haue pend;
For weake was my remembrance it to hold,
And bad her tongue that it so bluntly tolde.

Preeuing, Trial. *Felly*, Fiercely.
Ensample, Warning. *Vncase*, Strip.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS

T.E.S. 7

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